

PD LITERATURE

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Katsushika Hokusai (Japanese, 1760-1849). Morning Glories in Flowers and Buds, ca. 1830. Woodblock color print, 9 3/4 x 14 11/16 in. (24.8 x 37.3 cm). Brooklyn Museum, Frank L. Babbott Fund, 41.603

HYMEN

from The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Hymen*, by Hilda Doolittle

As from a temple service, tall and dignified, with slow pace, each a queen, the sixteen matrons from the temple of Hera pass before the curtain--a dark purple hung between Ionic columns--of the porch or open hall of a palace. Their hair is bound as the marble hair of the temple Hera. Each wears a crown or diadem of gold.

They sing--the music is temple music, deep, simple, chanting notes:

From the closed garden
Where our feet pace
Back and forth each day,
This gladiolus white,
This red, this purple spray--
Gladiolus tall with dignity
As yours, lady--we lay
Before your feet and pray:

Of all the blessings--
Youth, joy, ecstasy--
May one gift last
(As the tall gladiolus may
Outlast the wind-flower,
Winter-rose or rose),
One gift above,
Encompassing all those;

For her, for him,
For all within these palace walls,
Beyond the feast,
Beyond the cry of Hymen and the torch,
Beyond the night and music
Echoing through the porch till day.

The music, with its deep chanting notes, dies away. The curtain hangs motionless in rich, full folds. Then from this background of darkness, dignity and solemn repose, a flute gradually detaches itself, becomes clearer and clearer, pipes alone one shrill, simple little melody.

From the distance, four children's voices blend with the flute, and four very little girls pass singly before the curtain, small maids or attendants of the sixteen matrons. Their hair is short and curls at the back of their heads like the hair of the chryselephantine Hermes. They sing:

Where the first crocus buds unfold
We found these petals near the cold
Swift river-bed.

Beneath the rocks where ivy-frond
Puts forth new leaves to gleam beyond
Those lately dead:

The very smallest two or three
Of gold (gold pale as ivory)
We gathered.

When the little girls have passed before the curtain, a wood-wind weaves a richer note into the flute melody; then the two blend into one song. But as the wood-wind grows in mellowness and richness, the flute gradually dies away into a secondary theme and the wood-wind alone evolves the melody of a new song.

Two by two--like two sets of medallions with twin profiles distinct, one head slightly higher, bent forward a little--the four figures of four slight, rather fragile taller children, are outlined with sharp white contour against the curtain.

The hair is smooth against the heads, falling to the shoulders but slightly waved against the nape of the neck. They are looking down, each at a spray of winter-rose. The tunics fall to the knees in sharp marble folds. They sing:

Never more will the wind
Cherish you again,
Never more will the rain.

Never more
Shall we find you bright
In the snow and wind.

The snow is melted,
The snow is gone,
And you are flown:

Like a bird out of our hand,
Like a light out of our heart,
You are gone.

As the wistful notes of the wood-wind gradually die away, there comes a sudden, shrill, swift piping.

_Free and wild, like the wood-maidens of Artemis, is this last group of four--very straight with heads tossed back. They sing in rich, free,

swift notes. They move swiftly before the curtain in contrast to the slow, important pace of the first two groups. Their hair is loose and rayed out like that of the sun-god. They are boyish in shape and gesture. They carry hyacinths in baskets, strapped like quivers to their backs. They reach to draw the flower sprays from the baskets, as the Huntress her arrows._

As they dart swiftly to and fro before the curtain, they are youth, they are spring--they are the Chelidonia, their song is the swallow-song of joy:

Between the hollows
Of the little hills
The spring spills blue--
Turquoise, sapphire, lapis-lazuli
On a brown cloth outspread.

Ah see,
How carefully we lay them now,
Each hyacinth spray,
Across the marble floor--
A pattern your bent eyes
May trace and follow
To the shut bridal door.

Lady, our love, our dear,
Our bride most fair,
They grew among the hollows
Of the hills;
As if the sea had spilled its blue,
As if the sea had risen
From its bed,
And sinking to the level of the shore,
Left hyacinths on the floor.

There is a pause. Flute, pipe and wood-wind blend in a full, rich movement. There is no definite melody but full, powerful rhythm like soft but steady wind above forest trees. Into this, like rain, gradually creeps the note of strings.

As the strings grow stronger and finally dominate the whole, the bride-chorus passes before the curtain. There may be any number in this chorus. The figures--tall young women, clothed in long white tunics--follow one another closely, yet are all distinct like a procession of a temple frieze.

_The bride in the center is not at first distinguishable from her maidens; but as they begin their song, the maidens draw apart into two groups, leaving the veiled symbolic figure standing alone in the

center._

The two groups range themselves to right and left like officiating priestesses. The veiled figure stands with her back against the curtain, the others being in profile. Her head is swathed in folds of diaphanous white, through which the features are visible, like the veiled Tanagra.

When the song is finished, the group to the bride's left turns about; also the bride, so that all face in one direction. In processional form they pass out, the figure of the bride again merging, not distinguishable from the maidens.

Strophe

But of her
Who can say if she is fair?
Bound with fillet,
Bound with myrtle
Underneath her flowing veil,
Only the soft length
(Beneath her dress)
Of saffron shoe is bright
As a great lily-heart
In its white loveliness.

Antistrophe

But of her
We can say that she is fair.
We bleached the fillet,
Brought the myrtle;
To us the task was set
Of knotting the fine threads of silk:
We fastened the veil,
And over the white foot
Drew on the painted shoe
Steeped in Illyrian crocus.

Strophe

But of her,
Who can say if she is fair?
For her head is covered over
With her mantle
White on white,
Snow on whiter amaranth,
Snow on hoar-frost,
Snow on snow,
Snow on whitest buds of myrrh.

Antistrophe

But of her,
We can say that she is fair;
For we know underneath
All the wanness,
All the heat
(In her blanched face)
Of desire
Is caught in her eyes as fire
In the dark center leaf
Of the white Syrian iris.

The rather hard, hieratic precision of the music--its stately pause and beat--is broken now into irregular lilt and rhythm of strings.

Four tall young women, very young matrons, enter in a group. They stand clear and fair, but this little group entirely lacks the austere precision of the procession of maidens just preceding them. They pause in the center of the stage; turn, one three-quarter, two in profile and the fourth full face; they stand, turned as if confiding in each other like a Tanagra group.

They sing lightly, their flower trays under their arms.

Along the yellow sand
Above the rocks
The laurel-bushes stand.
Against the shimmering heat
Each separate leaf
Is bright and cold,
And through the bronze
Of shining bark and wood
Run the fine threads of gold.

Here in our wicker-trays,
We bring the first faint blossoming
Of fragrant bays:

Lady, their blushes shine
As faint in hue
As when through petals
Of a laurel-rose
The sun shines through,
And throws a purple shadow
On a marble vase.

(Ah, love,

So her fair breasts will shine
With the faint shadow above.)

_The harp chords become again more regular in simple definite rhythm.
The music is not so intense as the bride-chorus; and quieter, more
sedate, than the notes preceding the entrance of the last group._

_Five or six slightly older serene young women enter in processional
form; each holding before her, with precise bending of arms, coverlets
and linen, carefully folded, as if for the bride couch. The garments are
purple, scarlet and deep blue, with edge of gold._

They sing to blending of wood-wind and harp.

From citron-bower be her bed,
Cut from branch of tree a-flower,
Fashioned for her maidenhead.

From Lydian apples, sweet of hue,
Cut the width of board and lathe.
Carve the feet from myrtle-wood.

Let the palings of her bed
Be quince and box-wood overlaid
With the scented bark of yew.

That all the wood in blossoming,
May calm her heart and cool her blood
For losing of her maidenhood.

_The wood-winds become more rich and resonant. A tall youth crosses the
stage as if seeking the bride door. The music becomes very rich, full of
color._

_The figure itself is a flame, an exaggerated symbol; the hair a flame;
the wings, deep red or purple, stand out against the curtains in a
contrasting or almost clashing shade of purple. The tunic, again a rich
purple or crimson, falls almost to the knees. The knees are bare; the
sandals elaborately strapped over and over. The curtain seems a rich
purple cloud, the figure, still brighter, like a flamboyant bird, half
emerged in the sunset._

_Love pauses just outside the bride's door with his gift, a tuft of
black-purple cyclamen. He sings to the accompaniment of wood-winds, in a
rich, resonant voice:_

The crimson cover of her bed
Is not so rich, nor so deeply bled
The purple-fish that dyed it red,

As when in a hot sheltered glen
There flowered these stalks of cyclamen:

(Purple with honey-points
Of horns for petals;
Sweet and dark and crisp,
As fragrant as her maiden kiss.)

There with his honey-seeking lips
The bee clings close and warmly sips,
And seeks with honey-thighs to sway
And drink the very flower away.

(Ah, stern the petals drawing back;
Ah rare, ah virginal her breath!)

Crimson, with honey-seeking lips,
The sun lies hot across his back,
The gold is decked across his wings.
Quivering he sways and quivering clings
(Ah, rare her shoulders drawing back!)
One moment, then the plunderer slips
Between the purple flower-lips.

_ Love passes out with a crash of cymbals. There is a momentary pause and
the music falls into its calm, wave-like rhythm. _

_ A band of boys passes before the curtain. They pass from side to side,
crossing and re-crossing; but their figures never confuse one another,
the outlines are never blurred. They stand out against the curtain with
symbolic gesture, stooping as if to gather up the wreaths, or swaying
with long stiff branch as if to sweep the fallen petals from the
floor. _

_ There is no marked melody from the instruments, but the boys' voices,
humming lightly as they enter, gradually evolve a little dance song.
There are no words but the lilt up and down of the boys' tenor voices. _

_ Then, as if they had finished the task of gathering up the wreaths and
sweeping the petals, they stand in groups of two before the pillars
where the torches have been placed. They lift the torches from the
brackets. They hold them aloft between them, one torch to each two boys.
Their figures are cut against the curtain like the simple, triangular
design on the base of a vase or frieze--the boys' heads on a level, the
torches above them. _

_ They sing in clear, half-subdued voices. _

Where love is king,

Ah, there is little need
To dance and sing,
With bridal-torch to flare
Amber and scatter light
Across the purple air,
To sing and dance
To flute-note and to reed.

Where love is come
(Ah, love is come indeed!)
Our limbs are numb
Before his fiery need;
With all their glad
Rapture of speech unsaid,
Before his fiery lips
Our lips are mute and dumb.

Ah, sound of reed,
Ah, flute and trumpet wail,
Ah, joy decreed--
The fringes of her veil
Are seared and white;
Across the flare of light,
Blinded the torches fail.
(Ah, love is come indeed!)

At the end of the song, the torches flicker out and the figures are no longer distinguishable in the darkness. They pass out like shadows. The purple curtain hangs black and heavy.

The music dies away and is finally cut short with a few deep, muted chords.

REGINALD

from The Project Gutenberg eBook, *Reginald*, by Saki

I did it--I who should have known better. I persuaded Reginald to go to the McKillops' garden-party against his will.

We all make mistakes occasionally.

"They know you're here, and they'll think it so funny if you don't go. And I want particularly to be in with Mrs. McKillop just now."

"I know, you want one of her smoke Persian kittens as a prospective wife for Wumples--or a husband, is it?" (Reginald has a magnificent scorn for details, other than sartorial.) "And I am expected to undergo social martyrdom to suit the connubial exigencies"--

"Reginald! It's nothing of the kind, only I'm sure Mrs. McKillop Would be pleased if I brought you. Young men of your brilliant attractions are rather at a premium at her garden-parties."

"Should be at a premium in heaven," remarked Reginald complacently.

"There will be very few of you there, if that is what you mean. But seriously, there won't be any great strain upon your powers of endurance; I promise you that you shan't have to play croquet, or talk to the Archdeacon's wife, or do anything that is likely to bring on physical prostration. You can just wear your sweetest clothes and moderately amiable expression, and eat chocolate-creams with the appetite of a _blase_ parrot. Nothing more is demanded of you."

Reginald shut his eyes. "There will be the exhaustingly up-to-date young women who will ask me if I have seen _San Toy_ ; a less progressive grade who will yearn to hear about the Diamond Jubilee--the historic event, not the horse. With a little encouragement, they will inquire if I saw the Allies march into Paris. Why are women so fond of raking up the past? They're as bad as tailors, who invariably remember what you owe them for a suit long after you've ceased to wear it."

"I'll order lunch for one o'clock; that will give you two and a half hours to dress in."

Reginald puckered his brow into a tortured frown, and I knew that my point was gained. He was debating what tie would go with which waistcoat.

Even then I had my misgivings.

* * * * *

During the drive to the McKillops' Reginald was possessed with a great peace, which was not wholly to be accounted for by the fact that he had inveigled his feet into shoes a size too small for them. I misgave more than ever, and having once launched Reginald on to the McKillops' lawn, I established him near a seductive dish of _marrons glaces_, and as far from the Archdeacon's wife as possible; as I drifted away to a diplomatic distance I heard with painful distinctness the eldest Mawkby girl asking him if he had seen _San Toy_.

It must have been ten minutes later, not more, and I had been having _quite_ an enjoyable chat with my hostess, and had promised to lend her _The Eternal City_ and my recipe for rabbit mayonnaise, and was just about to offer a kind home for her third Persian kitten, when I perceived, out of the corner of my eye, that Reginald was not where I had left him, and that the _marrons glaces_ were untasted. At the same moment I became aware that old Colonel Mendoza was essaying to tell his classic story of how he introduced golf into India, and that Reginald was in dangerous proximity. There are occasions when Reginald is caviare to the Colonel.

"When I was at Poona in '76"--

"My dear Colonel," purred Reginald, "fancy admitting such a thing! Such a give-away for one's age! I wouldn't admit being on this planet in '76." (Reginald in his wildest lapses into veracity never admits to being more than twenty-two.)

The Colonel went to the colour of a fig that has attained great ripeness, and Reginald, ignoring my efforts to intercept him, glided away to another part of the lawn. I found him a few minutes later happily engaged in teaching the youngest Rampage boy the approved theory of mixing absinthe, within full earshot of his mother. Mrs. Rampage occupies a prominent place in local Temperance movements.

As soon as I had broken up this unpromising _tete-a-tete_ and settled Reginald where he could watch the croquet players losing their tempers, I wandered off to find my hostess and renew the kitten negotiations at the point where they had been interrupted. I did not succeed in running her down at once, and eventually it was Mrs. McKillop who sought me out, and her conversation was not of kittens.

"Your cousin is discussing _Zaza_ with the Archdeacon's wife; at least, he is discussing, she is ordering her carriage."

She spoke in the dry, staccato tone of one who repeats a French exercise, and I knew that as far as Millie McKillop was concerned, Wumples was

devoted to a lifelong celibacy.

"If you don't mind," I said hurriedly, "I think we'd like our carriage ordered too," and I made a forced march in the direction of the croquet-ground.

I found everyone talking nervously and feverishly of the weather and the war in South Africa, except Reginald, who was reclining in a comfortable chair with the dreamy, far-away look that a volcano might wear just after it had desolated entire villages. The Archdeacon's wife was buttoning up her gloves with a concentrated deliberation that was fearful to behold. I shall have to treble my subscription to her Cheerful Sunday Evenings Fund before I dare set foot in her house again.

At that particular moment the croquet players finished their game, which had been going on without a symptom of finality during the whole afternoon. Why, I ask, should it have stopped precisely when a counter-attraction was so necessary? Everyone seemed to drift towards the area of disturbance, of which the chairs of the Archdeacon's wife and Reginald formed the storm-centre. Conversation flagged, and there settled upon the company that expectant hush that precedes the dawn--when your neighbours don't happen to keep poultry.

"What did the Caspian Sea?" asked Reginald, with appalling suddenness.

There were symptoms of a stampede. The Archdeacon's wife looked at me. Kipling or someone has described somewhere the look a foundered camel gives when the caravan moves on and leaves it to its fate. The peptonised reproach in the good lady's eyes brought the passage vividly to my mind.

I played my last card.

"Reginald, it's getting late, and a sea-mist is coming on." I knew that the elaborate curl over his right eyebrow was not guaranteed to survive a sea-mist.

* * * * *

"Never, never again, will I take you to a garden-party. Never . . . You behaved abominably . . . What did the Caspian see?"

A shade of genuine regret for misused opportunities passed over Reginald's face.

"After all," he said, "I believe an apricot tie would have gone better with the lilac waistcoat."

SCORN

from The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Orchard and Vineyard*, by Vita Sackville-West

THEY roll, clan by clan, kin by kin, on wide orderly roads,
Burghers and citizens all, in a stately procession,
Driving before them the wealth of their worldly possession,
Cattle, and horses, and pack-mules with sumptuous loads.

In velvet and fur and fat pearls,--rich lustre and sheen,
Paunches and plenty, and fatuous voices contented
Counting their gain, and their women all jewelled and scented
Smiling false smiles with the little sharp word in between.

But those in the by-paths of vagrancy, star-gazers, they,
Ragged and feckless and young, with no thought but their singing,
Derisive of gain, and light as the bird in its winging,
Stopping to kiss or to frolic, the simple and gay,

God's fools,--the beloved of God who made them and the wind,
Gipsies and wastrels of life, the heedless of warning,
Chasing the butterfly now on the breeze of the morning,
Laugh at the passing procession that leaves them behind.

A SOCIETY

from The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Monday or Tuesday*, by Virginia Woolf

This is how it all came about. Six or seven of us were sitting one day after tea. Some were gazing across the street into the windows of a milliner's shop where the light still shone brightly upon scarlet feathers and golden slippers. Others were idly occupied in building little towers of sugar upon the edge of the tea tray. After a time, so far as I can remember, we drew round the fire and began as usual to praise men--how strong, how noble, how brilliant, how courageous, how beautiful they were--how we envied those who by hook or by crook managed to get attached to one for life--when Poll, who had said nothing, burst into tears. Poll, I must tell you, has always been queer. For one thing her father was a strange man. He left her a fortune in his will, but on condition that she read all the books in the London Library. We comforted her as best we could; but we knew in our hearts how vain it was. For though we like her, Poll is no beauty; leaves her shoe laces untied; and must have been thinking, while we praised men, that not one of them would ever wish to marry her. At last she dried her tears. For some time we could make nothing of what she said. Strange enough it was in all conscience. She told us that, as we knew, she spent most of her time in the London Library, reading. She had begun, she said, with English literature on the top floor; and was steadily working her way down to the Times on the bottom. And now half, or perhaps only a quarter, way through a terrible thing had happened. She could read no more. Books were not what we thought them. "Books," she cried, rising to her feet and speaking with an intensity of desolation which I shall never forget, "are for the most part unutterably bad!"

Of course we cried out that Shakespeare wrote books, and Milton and Shelley.

"Oh, yes," she interrupted us. "You've been well taught, I can see. But you are not members of the London Library." Here her sobs broke forth anew. At length, recovering a little, she opened one of the pile of books which she always carried about with her--"From a Window" or "In a Garden," or some such name as that it was called, and it was written by a man called Benton or Henson, or something of that kind. She read the first few pages. We listened in silence. "But that's not a book," someone said. So she chose another. This time it was a history, but I have forgotten the writer's name. Our trepidation increased as she went on. Not a word of it seemed to be true, and the style in which it was written was execrable.

"Poetry! Poetry!" we cried, impatiently. "Read us poetry!" I cannot describe the desolation which fell upon us as she opened a little volume and mouthed out the verbose, sentimental foolery which it contained.

"It must have been written by a woman," one of us urged. But no. She told us that it was written by a young man, one of the most famous poets of the day. I leave you to imagine what the shock of the discovery was. Though we all cried and begged her to read no more, she persisted and read us extracts from the Lives of the Lord Chancellors. When she had finished, Jane, the eldest and wisest of us, rose to her feet and said that she for one was not convinced.

"Why," she asked, "if men write such rubbish as this, should our mothers have wasted their youth in bringing them into the world?"

We were all silent; and, in the silence, poor Poll could be heard sobbing out, "Why, why did my father teach me to read?"

Clorinda was the first to come to her senses. "It's all our fault," she said. "Every one of us knows how to read. But no one, save Poll, has ever taken the trouble to do it. I, for one, have taken it for granted that it was a woman's duty to spend her youth in bearing children. I venerated my mother for bearing ten; still more my grandmother for bearing fifteen; it was, I confess, my own ambition to bear twenty. We have gone on all these ages supposing that men were equally industrious, and that their works were of equal merit. While we have borne the children, they, we supposed, have borne the books and the pictures. We have populated the world. They have civilized it. But now that we can read, what prevents us from judging the results? Before we bring another child into the world we must swear that we will find out what the world is like."

So we made ourselves into a society for asking questions. One of us was to visit a man-of-war; another was to hide herself in a scholar's study; another was to attend a meeting of business men; while all were to read books, look at pictures, go to concerts, keep our eyes open in the streets, and ask questions perpetually. We were very young. You can judge of our simplicity when I tell you that before parting that night we agreed that the objects of life were to produce good people and good books. Our questions were to be directed to finding out how far these objects were now attained by men. We vowed solemnly that we would not bear a single child until we were satisfied.

Off we went then, some to the British Museum; others to the King's Navy; some to Oxford; others to Cambridge; we visited the Royal Academy and the Tate; heard modern music in concert rooms, went to the Law Courts, and saw new plays. No one dined out without asking her partner certain questions and carefully noting his replies. At intervals we met together and compared our observations. Oh, those were merry meetings! Never have I laughed so much as I did when Rose read her notes upon "Honour" and described how she had dressed herself as an Æthiopian Prince and gone aboard one of His Majesty's ships. Discovering the hoax, the Captain

visited her (now disguised as a private gentleman) and demanded that honour should be satisfied. "But how?" she asked. "How?" he bellowed. "With the cane of course!" Seeing that he was beside himself with rage and expecting that her last moment had come, she bent over and received, to her amazement, six light taps upon the behind. "The honour of the British Navy is avenged!" he cried, and, raising herself, she saw him with the sweat pouring down his face holding out a trembling right hand. "Away!" she exclaimed, striking an attitude and imitating the ferocity of his own expression, "My honour has still to be satisfied!" "Spoken like a gentleman!" he returned, and fell into profound thought. "If six strokes avenge the honour of the King's Navy," he mused, "how many avenge the honour of a private gentleman?" He said he would prefer to lay the case before his brother officers. She replied haughtily that she could not wait. He praised her sensibility. "Let me see," he cried suddenly, "did your father keep a carriage?" "No," she said. "Or a riding horse!" "We had a donkey," she bethought her, "which drew the mowing machine." At this his face lighted. "My mother's name----" she added. "For God's sake, man, don't mention your mother's name!" he shrieked, trembling like an aspen and flushing to the roots of his hair, and it was ten minutes at least before she could induce him to proceed. At length he decreed that if she gave him four strokes and a half in the small of the back at a spot indicated by himself (the half conceded, he said, in recognition of the fact that her great grandmother's uncle was killed at Trafalgar) it was his opinion that her honour would be as good as new. This was done; they retired to a restaurant; drank two bottles of wine for which he insisted upon paying; and parted with protestations of eternal friendship.

Then we had Fanny's account of her visit to the Law Courts. At her first visit she had come to the conclusion that the Judges were either made of wood or were impersonated by large animals resembling man who had been trained to move with extreme dignity, mumble and nod their heads. To test her theory she had liberated a handkerchief of bluebottles at the critical moment of a trial, but was unable to judge whether the creatures gave signs of humanity for the buzzing of the flies induced so sound a sleep that she only woke in time to see the prisoners led into the cells below. But from the evidence she brought we voted that it is unfair to suppose that the Judges are men.

Helen went to the Royal Academy, but when asked to deliver her report upon the pictures she began to recite from a pale blue volume, "O! for the touch of a vanished hand and the sound of a voice that is still. Home is the hunter, home from the hill. He gave his bridle reins a shake. Love is sweet, love is brief. Spring, the fair spring, is the year's pleasant King. O! to be in England now that April's there. Men must work and women must weep. The path of duty is the way to glory--" We could listen to no more of this gibberish.

"We want no more poetry!" we cried.

"Daughters of England!" she began, but here we pulled her down, a vase of water getting spilt over her in the scuffle.

"Thank God!" she exclaimed, shaking herself like a dog. "Now I'll roll on the carpet and see if I can't brush off what remains of the Union Jack. Then perhaps--" here she rolled energetically. Getting up she began to explain to us what modern pictures are like when Castalia stopped her.

"What is the average size of a picture?" she asked. "Perhaps two feet by two and a half," she said. Castalia made notes while Helen spoke, and when she had done, and we were trying not to meet each other's eyes, rose and said, "At your wish I spent last week at Oxbridge, disguised as a charwoman. I thus had access to the rooms of several Professors and will now attempt to give you some idea--only," she broke off, "I can't think how to do it. It's all so queer. These Professors," she went on, "live in large houses built round grass plots each in a kind of cell by himself. Yet they have every convenience and comfort. You have only to press a button or light a little lamp. Their papers are beautifully filed. Books abound. There are no children or animals, save half a dozen stray cats and one aged bullfinch--a cock. I remember," she broke off, "an Aunt of mine who lived at Dulwich and kept cactuses. You reached the conservatory through the double drawing-room, and there, on the hot pipes, were dozens of them, ugly, squat, bristly little plants each in a separate pot. Once in a hundred years the Aloe flowered, so my Aunt said. But she died before that happened--" We told her to keep to the point. "Well," she resumed, "when Professor Hobkin was out, I examined his life work, an edition of Sappho. It's a queer looking book, six or seven inches thick, not all by Sappho. Oh, no. Most of it is a defence of Sappho's chastity, which some German had denied, and I can assure you the passion with which these two gentlemen argued, the learning they displayed, the prodigious ingenuity with which they disputed the use of some implement which looked to me for all the world like a hairpin astounded me; especially when the door opened and Professor Hobkin himself appeared. A very nice, mild, old gentleman, but what could he know about chastity?" We misunderstood her.

"No, no," she protested, "he's the soul of honour I'm sure--not that he resembles Rose's sea captain in the least. I was thinking rather of my Aunt's cactuses. What could they know about chastity?"

Again we told her not to wander from the point,--did the Oxbridge professors help to produce good people and good books?--the objects of life.

"There!" she exclaimed. "It never struck me to ask. It never occurred to me that they could possibly produce anything."

"I believe," said Sue, "that you made some mistake. Probably Professor Hobkin was a gynæcologist. A scholar is a very different sort of man. A scholar is overflowing with humour and invention--perhaps addicted to wine, but what of that?--a delightful companion, generous, subtle, imaginative--as stands to reason. For he spends his life in company with the finest human beings that have ever existed."

"Hum," said Castalia. "Perhaps I'd better go back and try again."

Some three months later it happened that I was sitting alone when Castalia entered. I don't know what it was in the look of her that so moved me; but I could not restrain myself, and, dashing across the room, I clasped her in my arms. Not only was she very beautiful; she seemed also in the highest spirits. "How happy you look!" I exclaimed, as she sat down.

"I've been at Oxbridge," she said.

"Asking questions?"

"Answering them," she replied.

"You have not broken our vow?" I said anxiously, noticing something about her figure.

"Oh, the vow," she said casually. "I'm going to have a baby, if that's what you mean. You can't imagine," she burst out, "how exciting, how beautiful, how satisfying--"

"What is?" I asked.

"To--to--answer questions," she replied in some confusion. Whereupon she told me the whole of her story. But in the middle of an account which interested and excited me more than anything I had ever heard, she gave the strangest cry, half whoop, half holloa--

"Chastity! Chastity! Where's my chastity!" she cried. "Help Ho! The scent bottle!"

There was nothing in the room but a cruet containing mustard, which I was about to administer when she recovered her composure.

"You should have thought of that three months ago," I said severely.

"True," she replied. "There's not much good in thinking of it now. It was unfortunate, by the way, that my mother had me called Castalia."

"Oh, Castalia, your mother--" I was beginning when she reached for the mustard pot.

"No, no, no," she said, shaking her head. "If you'd been a chaste woman yourself you would have screamed at the sight of me--instead of which you rushed across the room and took me in your arms. No, Cassandra. We are neither of us chaste." So we went on talking.

Meanwhile the room was filling up, for it was the day appointed to discuss the results of our observations. Everyone, I thought, felt as I did about Castalia. They kissed her and said how glad they were to see her again. At length, when we were all assembled, Jane rose and said that it was time to begin. She began by saying that we had now asked questions for over five years, and that though the results were bound to be inconclusive--here Castalia nudged me and whispered that she was not so sure about that. Then she got up, and, interrupting Jane in the middle of a sentence, said:

"Before you say any more, I want to know--am I to stay in the room? Because," she added, "I have to confess that I am an impure woman."

Everyone looked at her in astonishment.

"You are going to have a baby?" asked Jane.

She nodded her head.

It was extraordinary to see the different expressions on their faces. A sort of hum went through the room, in which I could catch the words "impure," "baby," "Castalia," and so on. Jane, who was herself considerably moved, put it to us:

"Shall she go? Is she impure?"

Such a roar filled the room as might have been heard in the street outside.

"No! No! No! Let her stay! Impure? Fiddlesticks!" Yet I fancied that some of the youngest, girls of nineteen or twenty, held back as if overcome with shyness. Then we all came about her and began asking questions, and at last I saw one of the youngest, who had kept in the background, approach shyly and say to her:

"What is chastity then? I mean is it good, or is it bad, or is it nothing at all?" She replied so low that I could not catch what she said.

"You know I was shocked," said another, "for at least ten minutes."

"In my opinion," said Poll, who was growing crusty from always reading in the London Library, "chastity is nothing but ignorance--a most

discreditable state of mind. We should admit only the unchaste to our society. I vote that Castalia shall be our President."

This was violently disputed.

"It is as unfair to brand women with chastity as with unchastity," said Poll. "Some of us haven't the opportunity either. Moreover, I don't believe Cassy herself maintains that she acted as she did from a pure love of knowledge."

"He is only twenty-one and divinely beautiful," said Cassy, with a ravishing gesture.

"I move," said Helen, "that no one be allowed to talk of chastity or unchastity save those who are in love."

"Oh, bother," said Judith, who had been enquiring into scientific matters, "I'm not in love and I'm longing to explain my measures for dispensing with prostitutes and fertilizing virgins by Act of Parliament."

She went on to tell us of an invention of hers to be erected at Tube stations and other public resorts, which, upon payment of a small fee, would safeguard the nation's health, accommodate its sons, and relieve its daughters. Then she had contrived a method of preserving in sealed tubes the germs of future Lord Chancellors "or poets or painters or musicians," she went on, "supposing, that is to say, that these breeds are not extinct, and that women still wish to bear children----"

"Of course we wish to bear children!" cried Castalia, impatiently. Jane rapped the table.

"That is the very point we are met to consider," she said. "For five years we have been trying to find out whether we are justified in continuing the human race. Castalia has anticipated our decision. But it remains for the rest of us to make up our minds."

Here one after another of our messengers rose and delivered their reports. The marvels of civilisation far exceeded our expectations, and, as we learnt for the first time how man flies in the air, talks across space, penetrates to the heart of an atom, and embraces the universe in his speculations, a murmur of admiration burst from our lips.

"We are proud," we cried, "that our mothers sacrificed their youth in such a cause as this!" Castalia, who had been listening intently, looked prouder than all the rest. Then Jane reminded us that we had still much to learn, and Castalia begged us to make haste. On we went through a vast tangle of statistics. We learnt that England has a population of so many millions, and that such and such a proportion of them is

constantly hungry and in prison; that the average size of a working man's family is such, and that so great a percentage of women die from maladies incident to childbirth. Reports were read of visits to factories, shops, slums, and dockyards. Descriptions were given of the Stock Exchange, of a gigantic house of business in the City, and of a Government Office. The British Colonies were now discussed, and some account was given of our rule in India, Africa and Ireland. I was sitting by Castalia and I noticed her uneasiness.

"We shall never come to any conclusion at all at this rate," she said. "As it appears that civilisation is so much more complex than we had any notion, would it not be better to confine ourselves to our original enquiry? We agreed that it was the object of life to produce good people and good books. All this time we have been talking of aeroplanes, factories, and money. Let us talk about men themselves and their arts, for that is the heart of the matter."

So the diners out stepped forward with long slips of paper containing answers to their questions. These had been framed after much consideration. A good man, we had agreed, must at any rate be honest, passionate, and unworldly. But whether or not a particular man possessed those qualities could only be discovered by asking questions, often beginning at a remote distance from the centre. Is Kensington a nice place to live in? Where is your son being educated--and your daughter? Now please tell me, what do you pay for your cigars? By the way, is Sir Joseph a baronet or only a knight? Often it seemed that we learnt more from trivial questions of this kind than from more direct ones. "I accepted my peerage," said Lord Bunkum, "because my wife wished it." I forget how many titles were accepted for the same reason. "Working fifteen hours out of the twenty-four, as I do----" ten thousand professional men began.

"No, no, of course you can neither read nor write. But why do you work so hard?" "My dear lady, with a growing family----" "But _why_ does your family grow?" Their wives wished that too, or perhaps it was the British Empire. But more significant than the answers were the refusals to answer. Very few would reply at all to questions about morality and religion, and such answers as were given were not serious. Questions as to the value of money and power were almost invariably brushed aside, or pressed at extreme risk to the asker. "I'm sure," said Jill, "that if Sir Harley Tightboots hadn't been carving the mutton when I asked him about the capitalist system he would have cut my throat. The only reason why we escaped with our lives over and over again is that men are at once so hungry and so chivalrous. They despise us too much to mind what we say."

"Of course they despise us," said Eleanor. "At the same time how do you account for this--I made enquiries among the artists. Now, no woman has ever been an artist, has she, Poll?"

"Jane-Austen-Charlotte-Brontë-George-Eliot," cried Poll, like a man crying muffins in a back street.

"Damn the woman!" someone exclaimed. "What a bore she is!"

"Since Sappho there has been no female of first rate----" Eleanor began, quoting from a weekly newspaper.

"It's now well known that Sappho was the somewhat lewd invention of Professor Hobkin," Ruth interrupted.

"Anyhow, there is no reason to suppose that any woman ever has been able to write or ever will be able to write," Eleanor continued. "And yet, whenever I go among authors they never cease to talk to me about their books. Masterly! I say, or Shakespeare himself! (for one must say something) and I assure you, they believe me."

"That proves nothing," said Jane. "They all do it. Only," she sighed, "it doesn't seem to help us much. Perhaps we had better examine modern literature next. Liz, it's your turn."

Elizabeth rose and said that in order to prosecute her enquiry she had dressed as a man and been taken for a reviewer.

"I have read new books pretty steadily for the past five years," said she. "Mr. Wells is the most popular living writer; then comes Mr. Arnold Bennett; then Mr. Compton Mackenzie; Mr. McKenna and Mr. Walpole may be bracketed together." She sat down.

"But you've told us nothing!" we expostulated. "Or do you mean that these gentlemen have greatly surpassed Jane-Eliot and that English fiction is----where's that review of yours? Oh, yes, 'safe in their hands.'"

"Safe, quite safe," she said, shifting uneasily from foot to foot. "And I'm sure that they give away even more than they receive."

We were all sure of that. "But," we pressed her, "do they write good books?"

"Good books?" she said, looking at the ceiling. "You must remember," she began, speaking with extreme rapidity, "that fiction is the mirror of life. And you can't deny that education is of the highest importance, and that it would be extremely annoying, if you found yourself alone at Brighton late at night, not to know which was the best boarding house to stay at, and suppose it was a dripping Sunday evening--wouldn't it be nice to go to the Movies?"

"But what has that got to do with it?" we asked.

"Nothing--nothing--nothing whatever," she replied.

"Well, tell us the truth," we bade her.

"The truth? But isn't it wonderful," she broke off--"Mr. Chitter has written a weekly article for the past thirty years upon love or hot buttered toast and has sent all his sons to Eton----"

"The truth!" we demanded.

"Oh, the truth," she stammered, "the truth has nothing to do with literature," and sitting down she refused to say another word.

It all seemed to us very inconclusive.

"Ladies, we must try to sum up the results," Jane was beginning, when a hum, which had been heard for some time through the open window, drowned her voice.

"War! War! War! Declaration of War!" men were shouting in the street below.

We looked at each other in horror.

"What war?" we cried. "What war?" We remembered, too late, that we had never thought of sending anyone to the House of Commons. We had forgotten all about it. We turned to Poll, who had reached the history shelves in the London Library, and asked her to enlighten us.

"Why," we cried, "do men go to war?"

"Sometimes for one reason, sometimes for another," she replied calmly. "In 1760, for example----" The shouts outside drowned her words. "Again in 1797--in 1804--It was the Austrians in 1866--1870 was the Franco-Prussian--In 1900 on the other hand----"

"But it's now 1914!" we cut her short.

"Ah, I don't know what they're going to war for now," she admitted.

* * * * *

The war was over and peace was in process of being signed, when I once more found myself with Castalia in the room where our meetings used to be held. We began idly turning over the pages of our old minute books. "Queer," I mused, "to see what we were thinking five years ago." "We are agreed," Castalia quoted, reading over my shoulder, "that it is the

object of life to produce good people and good books." We made no comment upon that. "A good man is at any rate honest, passionate and unworldly." "What a woman's language!" I observed. "Oh, dear," cried Castalia, pushing the book away from her, "what fools we were! It was all Poll's father's fault," she went on. "I believe he did it on purpose--that ridiculous will, I mean, forcing Poll to read all the books in the London Library. If we hadn't learnt to read," she said bitterly, "we might still have been bearing children in ignorance and that I believe was the happiest life after all. I know what you're going to say about war," she checked me, "and the horror of bearing children to see them killed, but our mothers did it, and their mothers, and their mothers before them. And they didn't complain. They couldn't read. I've done my best," she sighed, "to prevent my little girl from learning to read, but what's the use? I caught Ann only yesterday with a newspaper in her hand and she was beginning to ask me if it was 'true.' Next she'll ask me whether Mr. Lloyd George is a good man, then whether Mr. Arnold Bennett is a good novelist, and finally whether I believe in God. How can I bring my daughter up to believe in nothing?" she demanded.

"Surely you could teach her to believe that a man's intellect is, and always will be, fundamentally superior to a woman's?" I suggested. She brightened at this and began to turn over our old minutes again. "Yes," she said, "think of their discoveries, their mathematics, their science, their philosophy, their scholarship----" and then she began to laugh, "I shall never forget old Hobkin and the hairpin," she said, and went on reading and laughing and I thought she was quite happy, when suddenly she drew the book from her and burst out, "Oh, Cassandra, why do you torment me? Don't you know that our belief in man's intellect is the greatest fallacy of them all?" "What?" I exclaimed. "Ask any journalist, schoolmaster, politician or public house keeper in the land and they will all tell you that men are much cleverer than women." "As if I doubted it," she said scornfully. "How could they help it? Haven't we bred them and fed and kept them in comfort since the beginning of time so that they may be clever even if they're nothing else? It's all our doing!" she cried. "We insisted upon having intellect and now we've got it. And it's intellect," she continued, "that's at the bottom of it. What could be more charming than a boy before he has begun to cultivate his intellect? He is beautiful to look at; he gives himself no airs; he understands the meaning of art and literature instinctively; he goes about enjoying his life and making other people enjoy theirs. Then they teach him to cultivate his intellect. He becomes a barrister, a civil servant, a general, an author, a professor. Every day he goes to an office. Every year he produces a book. He maintains a whole family by the products of his brain--poor devil! Soon he cannot come into a room without making us all feel uncomfortable; he condescends to every woman he meets, and dares not tell the truth even to his own wife; instead of rejoicing our eyes we have to shut them if we are to take him in our arms. True, they console themselves with stars of all shapes, ribbons

of all shades, and incomes of all sizes--but what is to console us? That we shall be able in ten years' time to spend a week-end at Lahore? Or that the least insect in Japan has a name twice the length of its body? Oh, Cassandra, for Heaven's sake let us devise a method by which men may bear children! It is our only chance. For unless we provide them with some innocent occupation we shall get neither good people nor good books; we shall perish beneath the fruits of their unbridled activity; and not a human being will survive to know that there once was Shakespeare!"

"It is too late," I replied. "We cannot provide even for the children that we have."

"And then you ask me to believe in intellect," she said.

While we spoke, men were crying hoarsely and wearily in the street, and, listening, we heard that the Treaty of Peace had just been signed. The voices died away. The rain was falling and interfered no doubt with the proper explosion of the fireworks.

"My cook will have bought the Evening News," said Castalia, "and Ann will be spelling it out over her tea. I must go home."

"It's no good--not a bit of good," I said. "Once she knows how to read there's only one thing you can teach her to believe in--and that is herself."

"Well, that would be a change," sighed Castalia.

So we swept up the papers of our Society, and, though Ann was playing with her doll very happily, we solemnly made her a present of the lot and told her we had chosen her to be President of the Society of the future--upon which she burst into tears, poor little girl.

DAY THAT I HAVE LOVED

from Project Gutenberg's *The Collected Poems of Rupert Brooke*

Tenderly, day that I have loved, I close your eyes,
And smooth your quiet brow, and fold your thin dead hands.
The grey veils of the half-light deepen; colour dies.
I bear you, a light burden, to the shrouded sands,

Where lies your waiting boat, by wreaths of the sea's making
Mist-garlanded, with all grey weeds of the water crowned.
There you'll be laid, past fear of sleep or hope of waking;
And over the unmoving sea, without a sound,

Faint hands will row you outward, out beyond our sight,
Us with stretched arms and empty eyes on the far-gleaming
And marble sand. . . .

Beyond the shifting cold twilight,
Further than laughter goes, or tears, further than dreaming,
There'll be no port, no dawn-lit islands! But the drear
Waste darkening, and, at length, flame ultimate on the deep.
Oh, the last fire -- and you, unkissed, unfriended there!
Oh, the lone way's red ending, and we not there to weep!

(We found you pale and quiet, and strangely crowned with flowers,
Lovely and secret as a child. You came with us,
Came happily, hand in hand with the young dancing hours,
High on the downs at dawn!) Void now and tenebrous,

The grey sands curve before me. . . .
From the inland meadows,
Fragrant of June and clover, floats the dark, and fills
The hollow sea's dead face with little creeping shadows,
And the white silence brims the hollow of the hills.

Close in the nest is folded every weary wing,
Hushed all the joyful voices; and we, who held you dear,
Eastward we turn and homeward, alone, remembering . . .
Day that I loved, day that I loved, the Night is here!

THE PUNCTILIOUSNESS OF DON SEBASTIAN

from The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Orientations*, by William Somerset Maugham

I

Xiormonez is the most inaccessible place in Spain. Only one train arrives there in the course of the day, and that arrives at two o'clock in the morning; only one train leaves it, and that starts an hour before sunrise. No one has ever been able to discover what happens to the railway officials during the intermediate one-and-twenty hours. A German painter I met there, who had come by the only train, and had been endeavouring for a fortnight to get up in time to go away, told me that he had frequently gone to the station in order to clear up the mystery, but had never been able to do so; yet, from his inquiries, he was inclined to suspect--that was as far as he would commit himself, being a cautious man--that they spent the time in eating garlic and smoking execrable cigarettes. The guide-books tell you that Xiormonez possesses the eyebrows of Joseph of Arimathea, a cathedral of the greatest quaintness, and battlements untouched since their erection in the fourteenth century. And they strongly advise you to visit it, but recommend you before doing so to add Keating's insect powder to your other toilet necessities.

I was travelling to Madrid in an express train which had been rushing along at the pace of sixteen miles an hour, when suddenly it stopped. I leant out of the window, asking where we were.

'Xiormonez!' answered the guard.

'I thought we did not stop at Xiormonez.'

'We do not stop at Xiormonez,' he replied impassively.

'But we are stopping now!'

'That may be; but we are going on again.'

I had already learnt that it was folly to argue with a Spanish guard, and, drawing back my head, I sat down. But, looking at my watch, I saw that it was only ten. I should never again have a chance of inspecting the eyebrows of Joseph of Arimathea unless I chartered a special train, so, seizing the opportunity and my bag, I jumped out.

The only porter told me that everyone in Xiormonez was asleep at that hour, and recommended me to spend the night in the waiting-room, but I bribed him heavily; I offered him two pesetas, which is nearly fifteenpence, and, leaving the train to its own devices, he shouldered

my bag and started off.

Along a stony road we walked into the dark night, the wind blowing cold and bitter, and the clouds chasing one another across the sky. In front, I could see nothing but the porter hurrying along, bent down under the weight of my bag, and the wind blew icily. I buttoned up my coat. And then I regretted the warmth of the carriage, the comfort of my corner and my rug; I wished I had peacefully continued my journey to Madrid--I was on the verge of turning back as I heard the whistling of the train. I hesitated, but the porter hurried on, and fearing to lose him in the night, I sprang forwards. Then the puffing of the engine, and on the smoke the bright reflection of the furnace, and the train steamed away; like Abd-er-Rahman, I felt that I had flung my scabbard into the flames.

Still the porter hurried on, bent down under the weight of my bag, and I saw no light in front of me to announce the approach to a town. On each side, bordering the road, were trees, and beyond them darkness. And great black clouds hastened after one another across the heavens. Then, as we walked along, we came to a rough stone cross, and lying on the steps before it was a woman with uplifted hands. And the wind blew bitter and keen, freezing the marrow of one's bones. What prayers had she to offer that she must kneel there alone in the night? We passed another cross standing up with its outstretched arms like a soul in pain. At last a heavier night rose before me, and presently I saw a great stone arch. Passing beneath it, I found myself immediately in the town.

The street was tortuous and narrow, paved with rough cobbles; and it rose steeply, so that the porter bent lower beneath his burden, panting. With the bag on his shoulders he looked like some hunchbacked gnome, a creature of nightmare. On either side rose tall houses, lying crooked and irregular, leaning towards one another at the top, so that one could not see the clouds, and their windows were great, black apertures like giant mouths. There was not a light, not a soul, not a sound--except that of my own feet and the heavy panting of the porter. We wound through the streets, round corners, through low arches, a long way up the steep cobbles, and suddenly down broken steps. They hurt my feet, and I stumbled and almost fell, but the hunchback walked along nimbly, hurrying ever. Then we came into an open space, and the wind caught us again, and blew through our clothes, so that I shrank up, shivering. And never a soul did we see as we walked on; it might have been a city of the dead. Then past a tall church: I saw a carved porch, and from the side grim devils grinning down upon me; the porter dived through an arch, and I groped my way along a narrow passage. At length he stopped, and with a sigh threw down the bag. He beat with his fists against an iron door, making the metal ring. A window above was thrown open, and a voice cried out. The porter answered; there was a clattering down the stairs, an unlocking, and the door was timidly held open, so that I saw a woman, with the light of her candle throwing a strange yellow glare on

her face.

And so I arrived at the hotel of Xiormonez.

II

My night was troubled by the ghostly crying of the watchman: 'Protect us, Mary, Queen of Heaven; protect us, Mary!' Every hour it rang out stridently as soon as the heavy bells of the cathedral had ceased their clanging, and I thought of the woman kneeling at the cross, and wondered if her soul had found peace.

In the morning I threw open the windows and the sun came dancing in, flooding the room with gold. In front of me the great wall of the cathedral stood grim and grey, and the gargoyles looked savagely across the square.... The cathedral is admirable; when you enter you find yourself at once in darkness, and the air is heavy with incense; but, as your eyes become accustomed to the gloom, you see the black forms of penitents kneeling by pillars, looking towards an altar, and by the light of the painted windows a reredos, with the gaunt saints of an early painter, and aureoles shining dimly.

But the gem of the Cathedral of Xiormonez is the Chapel of the Duke de Losas, containing, as it does, the alabaster monument of Don Sebastian Emanuel de Mantona, Duque de Losas, and of the very illustrious Señora Doña Sodina de Berruguete, his wife. Like everything else in Spain, the chapel is kept locked up, and the guide-book tells you to apply to the porter at the palace of the present duke. I sent a little boy to fetch that worthy, who presently came back, announcing that the porter and his wife had gone into the country for the day, but that the duke was coming in person.

And immediately I saw walking towards me a little, dark man, wrapped up in a big _capa_, with the red and blue velvet of the lining flung gaudily over his shoulder. He bowed courteously as he approached, and I perceived that on the crown his hair was somewhat more than thin. I hesitated a little, rather awkwardly, for the guide-book said that the porter exacted a fee of one peseta for opening the chapel--one could scarcely offer sevenpence-halfpenny to a duke. But he quickly put an end to all doubt, for, as he unlocked the door, he turned to me and said,--

'The fee is one franc.'

As I gave it him he put it in his pocket and gravely handed me a little printed receipt. _Baedeker_ had obligingly informed me that the Duchy of Losas was shorn of its splendour, but I had not understood that the present representative added to his income by exhibiting the bones of his ancestors at a franc a head....

We entered, and the duke pointed out the groining of the roof and the tracery of the windows.

'This chapel contains some of the finest Gothic in Spain,' he said.

When he considered that I had sufficiently admired the architecture, he turned to the pictures, and, with the fluency of a professional guide, gave me their subjects and the names of the artists.

'Now we come to the tombs of Don Sebastian, the first Duke of Losas, and his spouse, Doña Sodina--not, however, the first duchess.'

The monument stood in the middle of the chapel, covered with a great pall of red velvet, so that no economical tourist should see it through the bars of the gate and thus save his peseta. The duke removed the covering and watched me silently, a slight smile trembling below his little, black moustache.

The duke and his wife, who was not his duchess, lay side by side on a bed of carved alabaster; at the corners were four twisted pillars, covered with little leaves and flowers, and between them bas-reliefs representing Love, and Youth, and Strength, and Pleasure, as if, even in the midst of death, death must be forgotten. Don Sebastian was in full armour. His helmet was admirably carved with a representation of the battle between the Centaurs and the Lapithæ; on the right arm-piece were portrayed the adventures of Venus and Mars, on the left the emotions of Vulcan; but on the breast-plate was an elaborate Crucifixion, with soldiers and women and apostles. The visor was raised, and showed a stern, heavy face, with prominent cheek bones, sensual lips and a massive chin.

'It is very fine,' I remarked, thinking the duke expected some remark.

'People have thought so for three hundred years,' he replied gravely.

He pointed out to me the hands of Don Sebastian.

'The guide-books have said that they are the finest hands in Spain. Tourists especially admire the tendons and veins, which, as you perceive, stand out as in no human hand would be possible. They say it is the summit of art.'

And he took me to the other side of the monument, that I might look at Doña Sodina.

'They say she was the most beautiful woman of her day,' he said, 'but in that case the Castilian lady is the only thing in Spain which has not degenerated.'

She was, indeed, not beautiful: her face was fat and broad, like her husband's; a short, ungraceful nose, and a little, nobbly chin; a thick neck, set dumpily on her marble shoulders. One could not but hope that the artist had done her an injustice.

The Duke of Losas made me observe the dog which was lying at her feet.

'It is a symbol of fidelity,' he said.

'The guide-book told me she was chaste and faithful.'

'If she had been,' he replied, smiling, 'Don Sebastian would perhaps never have become Duque de Losas.'

'Really!'

'It is an old history which I discovered one day among some family papers.'

I pricked up my ears, and discreetly began to question him.

'Are you interested in old manuscripts?' said the duke. 'Come with me and I will show you what I have.'

With a flourish of the hand he waved me out of the chapel, and, having carefully locked the doors, accompanied me to his palace. He took me into a Gothic chamber, furnished with worn French furniture, the walls covered with cheap paper. Offering me a cigarette, he opened a drawer and produced a faded manuscript.

'This is the document in question,' he said. 'Those crooked and fantastic characters are terrible. I often wonder if the writers were able to read them.'

'You are fortunate to be the possessor of such things,' I remarked.

He shrugged his shoulders.

'What good are they? I would sooner have fifty pesetas than this musty parchment.'

An offer! I quickly reckoned it out into English money. He would doubtless have taken less, but I felt a certain delicacy in bargaining with a duke over his family secrets....

'Do you mean it? May I--er--'

He sprang towards me.

'Take it, my dear sir, take it. Shall I give you a receipt?'

And so, for thirty-one shillings and threepence, I obtained the only authentic account of how the frailty of the illustrious Señora Doña Sodina was indirectly the means of raising her husband to the highest dignities in Spain.

III

Don Sebastian and his wife had lived together for fifteen years, with the entirest happiness to themselves and the greatest admiration of their neighbours. People said that such an example of conjugal felicity was not often seen in those degenerate days, for even then they prated of the golden age of their grandfathers, lamenting their own decadence.... As behoved good Castilians, burdened with such a line of noble ancestors, the fortunate couple conducted themselves with all imaginable gravity. No strange eye was permitted to witness a caress between the lord and his lady, or to hear an expression of endearment; but everyone could see the devotion of Don Sebastian, the look of adoration which filled his eyes when he gazed upon his wife. And people said that Doña Sodina was worthy of all his affection. They said that her virtue was only matched by her piety, and her piety was patent to the whole world, for every day she went to the cathedral at Xiormonez and remained long immersed in her devotions. Her charity was exemplary, and no beggar ever applied to her in vain.

But even if Don Sebastian and his wife had not possessed these conjugal virtues, they would have been in Xiormonez persons of note, since not only did they belong to an old and respected family, which was rich as well, but the gentleman's brother was archbishop of the See, who, when he graced the cathedral city with his presence, paid the greatest attention to Don Sebastian and Doña Sodina. Everyone said that the Archbishop Pablo would shortly become a cardinal, for he was a great favourite with the king, and with the latter His Holiness the Pope was then on terms of quite unusual friendship.

And in those days, when the priesthood was more noticeable for its gallantry than for its good works, it was refreshing to find so high-placed a dignitary of the Church a pattern of Christian virtues, who, notwithstanding his gorgeous habit of life, his retinue, his palaces, recalled, by his freedom from at least two of the seven deadly sins, the simplicity of the apostles, which the common people have often supposed the perfect state of the minister of God.

Don Sebastian had been affianced to Doña Sodina when he was a boy of ten, and before she could properly pronounce the viperish sibilants of her native tongue. When the lady attained her sixteenth year, the pair

were solemnly espoused, and the young priest Pablo, the bridegroom's brother, assisted at the ceremony. In these days the union would have been instanced as a triumphant example of the success of the _mariage de convenance_, but at that time such arrangements were so usual that it never occurred to anyone to argue for or against them. Yet it was not customary for a young man of two-and-twenty to fall madly in love with the bride whom he saw for the first time a day or two before his marriage, and it was still less customary for the bride to give back an equal affection. For fifteen years the couple lived in harmony and contentment, with nothing to trouble the even tenor of their lives; and if there was a cloud in their sky, it was that a kindly Providence had vouchsafed no fruit to the union, notwithstanding the prayers and candles which Doña Sodina was known to have offered at the shrine of more than one saint in Spain who had made that kind of miracle particularly his own.

But even felicitous marriages cannot last for ever, since if the love does not die the lovers do. And so it came to pass that Doña Sodina, having eaten excessively of pickled shrimps, which the abbess of a highly respected convent had assured her were of great efficacy in the begetting of children, took a fever of the stomach, as the chronicle inelegantly puts it, and after a week of suffering was called to the other world, from which, as from the pickled shrimps, she had always expected much. There let us hope her virtues have been rewarded, and she rests in peace and happiness.

IV

When Don Sebastian walked from the cathedral to his house after the burial of his wife, no one saw a trace of emotion on his face, and it was with his wonted grave courtesy that he bowed to a friend as he passed him. Sternly and briefly, as usual, he gave orders that no one should disturb him, and went to the room of Doña Sodina; he knelt on the praying-stool which Doña Sodina had daily used for so many years, and he fixed his eyes on the crucifix hanging on the wall above it. The day passed, and the night passed, and Don Sebastian never moved--no thought or emotion entered him; being alive, he was like the dead; he was like the dead that linger on the outer limits of hell, with never a hope for the future, dull with the despair that shall last for ever and ever and ever. But when the woman who had nursed him in his childhood lovingly disobeyed his order and entered to give him food, she saw no tear in his eye, no sign of weeping.

'You are right!' he said, painfully rising from his knees. 'Give me to eat.'

Listlessly taking the food, he sank into a chair and looked at the bed on which had lately rested the corpse of Doña Sodina; but a kindly

nature relieved his unhappiness, and he fell into a weary sleep.

When he awoke, the night was far advanced; the house, the town were filled with silence; all round him was darkness, and the ivory crucifix shone dimly, dimly. Outside the door a page was sleeping; he woke him and bade him bring light.... In his sorrow, Don Sebastian began to look at the things his wife had loved; he fingered her rosary, and turned over the pages of the half-dozen pious books which formed her library; he looked at the jewels which he had seen glittering on her bosom; the brocades, the rich silks, the cloths of gold and silver that she had delighted to wear. And at last he came across an old breviary which he thought she had lost--how glad she would have been to find it, she had so often regretted it! The pages were musty with their long concealment, and only faintly could be detected the scent which Doña Sodina used yearly to make and strew about her things. Turning over the pages listlessly, he saw some crabbed writing; he took it to the light--'To-night, my beloved, I come.' And the handwriting was that of Pablo, Archbishop of Xiormonez. Don Sebastian looked at it long. Why should his brother write such words in the breviary of Doña Sodina? He turned the pages and the handwriting of his wife met his eye and the words were the same--'To-night, my beloved, I come'--as if they were such delight to her that she must write them herself. The breviary dropped from Don Sebastian's hand.

The taper, flickering in the draught, threw glaring lights on Don Sebastian's face, but it showed no change in it. He sat looking at the fallen breviary, and, in his mind, at the love which was dead. At last he passed his hand over his forehead.

'And yet,' he whispered, 'I loved thee well!'

But as the day came he picked up the breviary and locked it in a casket; he knelt again at the praying-stool and, lifting his hands to the crucifix, prayed silently. Then he locked the door of Doña Sodina's room, and it was a year before he entered it again.

That day the Archbishop Pablo came to his brother to offer consolation for his loss, and Don Sebastian at the parting kissed him on either cheek.

V

The people of Xiormonez said that Don Sebastian was heart-broken, for from the date of his wife's interment he was not seen in the streets by day. A few, returning home from some riot, had met him wandering in the dead of the night, but he passed them silently by. But he sent his servants to Toledo and Burgos, to Salamanca, Cordova, even to Paris and Rome; and from all these places they brought him books--and day after

day he studied in them, till the common folk asked if he had turned magician.

So passed eleven months, and nearly twelve, till it wanted but five days to the anniversary of the death of Doña Sodina. Then Don Sebastian wrote to his brother the letter which for months he had turned over in his mind,--

'_Seeing the instability of all human things, and the uncertain length of our exile upon earth, I have considered that it is evil for brothers to remain so separate. Therefore I implore you--who are my only relative in this world, and heir to all my goods and estates--to visit me quickly, for I have a presentiment that death is not far off, and I would see you before we are parted by the immense sea._'

The archbishop was thinking that he must shortly pay a visit to his cathedral city, and, as his brother had desired, came to Xiormonez immediately. On the anniversary of Doña Sodina's interment, Don Sebastian entertained Archbishop Pablo to supper.

'My brother,' said he, to his guest, 'I have lately received from Cordova a wine which I desire you to taste. It is very highly prized in Africa, whence I am told it comes, and it is made with curious art and labour.'

Glass cups were brought, and the wine poured in. The archbishop was a connoisseur, and held it between the light and himself, admiring the sparkling clearness, and then inhaled the odour.

'It is nectar,' he said.

At last he sipped it.

'The flavour is very strange.'

He drank deeply. Don Sebastian looked at him and smiled as his brother put down the empty glass. But when he was himself about to drink, the cup fell between his hands and the steward's, breaking into a hundred fragments, and the wine spilt on the floor.

'Fool!' cried Don Sebastian, and in his anger struck the servant.

But being a man of peace, the archbishop interposed.

'Do not be angry with him; it was an accident. There is more wine in the flagon.'

'No, I will not drink it,' said Don Sebastian, wrathfully. 'I will drink

no more to-night.'

The archbishop shrugged his shoulders.

When they were alone, Don Sebastian made a strange request.

'My brother, it is a year to-day that Sodina was buried, and I have not entered her room since then. But now I have a desire to see it. Will you come with me?'

The archbishop consented, and together they crossed the long corridor that led to Doña Sodina's apartment, preceded by a boy with lights.

Don Sebastian unlocked the door, and, taking the taper from the page's hand, entered. The archbishop followed. The air was chill and musty, and even now an odour of recent death seemed to pervade the room.

Don Sebastian went to a casket, and from it took a breviary. He saw his brother start as his eye fell on it. He turned over the leaves till he came to a page on which was the archbishop's handwriting, and handed it to him.

'Oh God!' exclaimed the priest, and looked quickly at the door. Don Sebastian was standing in front of it. He opened his mouth to cry out, but Don Sebastian interrupted him.

'Do not be afraid! I will not touch you.'

For a while they looked at one another silently; one pale, sweating with terror, the other calm and grave as usual. At last Don Sebastian spoke, hoarsely.

'Did she--did she love you?'

'Oh, my brother, forgive her. It was long ago--and she repented bitterly. And I--I!'

'I have forgiven you.'

The words were said so strangely that the archbishop shuddered. What did he mean?

Don Sebastian smiled.

'You have no cause for anxiety. From now it is finished. I will forget.' And, opening the door, he helped his brother across the threshold. The archbishop's hand was clammy as a hand of death.

When Don Sebastian bade his brother good-night, he kissed him on either

cheek.

VI

The priest returned to his palace, and when he was in bed his secretary prepared to read to him, as was his wont, but the archbishop sent him away, desiring to be alone. He tried to think; but the wine he had drunk was heavy upon him, and he fell asleep. But presently he awoke, feeling thirsty; he drank some water.... Then he became strangely wide-awake, a feeling of uneasiness came over him as of some threatening presence behind him, and again he felt the thirst. He stretched out his hand for the flagon, but now there was a mist before his eyes and he could not see, his hand trembled so that he spilled the water. And the uneasiness was magnified till it became a terror, and the thirst was horrible. He opened his mouth to call out, but his throat was dry, so that no sound came. He tried to rise from his bed, but his limbs were heavy and he could not move. He breathed quicker and quicker, and his skin was extraordinarily dry. The terror became an agony; it was unbearable. He wanted to bury his face in the pillows to hide it from him; he felt the hair on his head hard and dry, and it stood on end! He called to God for help, but no sound came from his mouth. Then the terror took shape and form, and he knew that behind him was standing Doña Sodina, and she was looking at him with terrible, reproachful eyes. And a second Doña Sodina came and stood at the end of the bed, and another came by her side, and the room was filled with them. And his thirst was horrible; he tried to moisten his mouth with spittle, but the source of it was dry. Cramps seized his limbs, so that he writhed with pain. Presently a red glow fell upon the room and it became hot and hotter, till he gasped for breath; it blinded him, but he could not close his eyes. And he knew it was the glow of hell-fire, for in his ears rang the groans of souls in torment, and among the voices he recognised that of Doña Sodina, and then--then he heard his own voice. And, in the livid heat, he saw himself in his episcopal robes, lying on the ground, chained to Doña Sodina, hand and foot. And he knew that as long as heaven and earth should last, the torment of hell would continue.

When the priests came in to their master in the morning, they found him lying dead, with his eyes wide open, staring with a ghastly brilliancy into the unknown. Then there was weeping and lamentation, and from house to house the people told one another that the archbishop had died in his sleep. The bells were set tolling, and as Don Sebastian, in his solitude, heard them, referring to the chief ingredient of that strange wine from Cordova, he permitted himself the only jest of his life.

'It was _Belladonna_ that sent his body to the worms; and it was _Belladonna_ that sent his soul to hell.'

VII

The chronicle does not state whether the thought of his brother's heritage had ever entered Don Sebastian's head; but the fact remains that he was sole heir, and the archbishop had gathered the loaves and fishes to such purpose during his life that his death made Don Sebastian one of the wealthiest men in Spain. The simplest actions in this world, oh Martin Tupper! have often the most unforeseen results.

Now, Don Sebastian had always been ambitious, and his changed circumstances made him realise more clearly than ever that his merit was worthy of a brilliant arena. The times were propitious, for the old king had just died, and the new one had sent away the army of priests and monks which had turned every day into a Sunday; people said that God Almighty had had His day, and that the heathen deities had come to rule in His stead. From all corners of Spain gallants were coming to enjoy the sunshine, and everyone who could make a compliment or a graceful bow was sure of a welcome.

So Don Sebastian prepared to go to Madrid. But before leaving his native town he thought well to appease a possibly vengeful Providence by erecting in the cathedral a chapel in honour of his patron saint; not that he thought the saints would trouble themselves about the death of his brother, even though the causes of it were not entirely natural, but Don Sebastian remembered that Pablo was an archbishop, and the fact caused him a certain anxiety. He called together architects and sculptors, and ordered them to erect an edifice befitting his dignity; and being a careful man, as all Spaniards are, thought he would serve himself as well as the saint, and bade the sculptors make an image of Doña Sodina and an image of himself, in order that he might use the chapel also as a burial-place.

To pay for this, Don Sebastian left the revenue of several of his brother's farms, and then, with a peaceful conscience, set out for the capital.

At Madrid he laid himself out to gain the favour of his sovereign, and by dint of unceasing flattery soon received much of the king's attention; and presently Philip deigned to ask his advice on petty matters. And since Don Sebastian took care to advise as he saw the king desired, the latter concluded that the courtier was a man of stamina and ability, and began to consult him on matters of state. Don Sebastian opined that the pleasure of the prince must always come before the welfare of the nation, and the king was so impressed with his sagacity that one day he asked his opinion on a question of precedence--to the indignation of the most famous councillors in the land.

But the haughty soul of Don Sebastian chafed because he was only one among many favourites. The court was full of flatterers as assiduous and

as obsequious as himself; his proud Castilian blood could brook no companions.... But one day, as he was moodily waiting in the royal antechamber, thinking of these things, it occurred to him that a certain profession had always been in great honour among princes, and he remembered that he had a cousin of eighteen, who was being educated in a convent near Xiormonez. She was beautiful. With buoyant heart he went to his house and told his steward to fetch her from the convent at once. Within a fortnight she was at Madrid.... Mercia was presented to the queen in the presence of Philip, and Don Sebastian noticed that the royal eye lighted up as he gazed on the bashful maiden. Then all the proud Castilian had to do was to shut his eyes and allow the king to make his own opportunities. Within a week Mercia was created maid of honour to the queen, and Don Sebastian was seized with an indisposition which confined him to his room.

The king paid his court royally, which is, boldly; and Doña Mercia had received in the convent too religious an education not to know that it was her duty to grant the king whatever it graciously pleased him to ask....

When Don Sebastian recovered from his illness, he found the world at his feet, for everyone was talking of the king's new mistress, and it was taken as a matter of course that her cousin and guardian should take a prominent part in the affairs of the country. But Don Sebastian was furious! He went to the king and bitterly reproached him for thus dishonouring him.... Philip was a humane and generous-minded man, and understood that with a certain temperament it might be annoying to have one's ward philander with a king, so he did his best to console the courtier. He called him his friend and brother; he told him he would always love him, but Don Sebastian would not be consoled. And nothing would comfort him except to be made High Admiral of the Fleet. Philip was charmed to settle the matter so simply, and as he delighted in generosity when to be generous cost him nothing, he also created Don Sebastian Duke of Losas, and gave him, into the bargain, the hand of the richest heiress in Spain.

And that is the end of the story of the punctiliousness of Don Sebastian. With his second wife he lived many years, beloved of his sovereign, courted by the world, honoured by all, till he was visited by the Destroyer of Delights and the Leveller of the Grandeur of this World....

VIII

Towards evening, the Duke of Losas passed my hotel, and, seeing me at the door, asked if I had read the manuscript.

'I thought it interesting,' I said, a little coldly, for, of course, I

knew no Englishman would have acted like Don Sebastian.

He shrugged his shoulders.

'It is not half so interesting as a good dinner.'

At these words I felt bound to offer him such hospitality as the hotel afforded. I found him a very agreeable messmate. He told me the further history of his family, which nearly became extinct at the end of the last century, since the only son of the seventh duke had, unfortunately, not been born of any duchess. But Ferdinand, who was then King of Spain, was unwilling that an ancient family should die out, and was, at the same time, sorely in want of money; so the titles and honours of the house were continued to the son of the seventh duke, and King Ferdinand built himself another palace.

'But now,' said my guest, mournfully shaking his head, 'it is finished. My palace and a few acres of barren rock are all that remain to me of the lands of my ancestors, and I am the last of the line.'

But I bade him not despair. He was a bachelor and a duke, and not yet forty. I advised him to go to the United States before they put a duty on foreign noblemen; this was before the war; and I recommended him to take Maida Vale and Manchester on his way. Personally, I gave him a letter of introduction to an heiress of my acquaintance at Hampstead; for even in these days it is not so bad a thing to be Duchess of Losas, and the present duke has no brother.

FURSTIN LIEBERWURST ZU SCHWEINEN-KALBER

from The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Terribly Intimate Portraits*, by Noël Coward

How strange it seems that she of whom we write is dust and less than dust below the fertile soil of her so beloved Prussia--Furstin Lieberwurst zu Schweinen-Kalber! Can you not rise from the grave once more to charm us with the magic of your voice? Are those deep, mellowed tones, so sonorous and appealing, never to be heard again? Ah, me! Why, indeed, should such divinity be so short lived? Who could play Juliet as she could? Nobody! Her enemies laughed and said that her chronic adenoids utterly destroyed all the beauty of the part. Jealousy! Vile jealousy! Genius always has that to contend with. Every one has failings. Gretchen Lieberwurst zu Schweinen-Kalber made of Juliet a woman--a pulsating, human woman, with failings like the rest of us, the chief of which happened to be adenoids.[15]

To trace this soul-stirring actress to her obscure birth has indeed been a labour--but withal, a labour of love! For who could help experiencing exquisite joy at unearthing trinkets and miniatures and broken memories of such a radiant being?

Nuremburg, red-roofed and gleaming in the sunlight, was the place wherein she first saw the light of day. Her father, Peter Schmidt, was by trade a sausage-moulder, for in those far-off days there was not the vast machinery of civilisation to wield the good meat into the requisite shape. Gretchen, when a girl, often used to watch her father as he plied his trade and recite to him verses she had learnt at her dame school--fragments from the Teutonic masterpieces of the time--"Kruschen Kruschen," and--

"Baby white and baby red,
Like a moon convulsive
Rolling up and down the bed,
Utterly repulsive!"--

a beautiful little lullaby of Herman Veigel's. Gretchen used to recite it with the tears pouring down her cheeks, so poignantly affected was she by the sensitive beauty of it. Her father also used to weep hopelessly--also her mother, if she happened to be near; and Heinrich, the cat, invariably retreated under the sofa, unutterably moved.

Life dragged on with some monotony for Gretchen. She often used to help her mother in the kitchen--and occasionally in the sitting-room. One day she became a woman! Every one noticed it. Neighbours used to meet her mother in the _strasse_ and say, "Frau Schmidt, your Gretchen is a woman." Frau Schmidt would nod proudly and reply, "Yes, we have seen

that; my Peter and I--we are very happy." Thus Gretchen left her girlhood behind her. It was her habit, so Grundelheim tells us, to walk out in the forest with one Hans Breitel, an actor at the municipal theatre. He used to teach her to talk to the birds, and when she besought him ardently to tell her stories of the theatre, he would relate to her the parts he had nearly played. Gretchen's heart thrilled--oh to be an actress, an actress! On her twenty-fourth birthday von Bottiburgen[16] tells us, Gretchen left home, and went to Berlin. She wanted to get an interview with Goethe. One day, after she had been in Berlin a little while, she found him. Brampenrich describes the scene for us, so beautifully and with such truly exquisite rotundity of style:--

"The Great Goethe ate at his lunch. What was that noise? He swiftly put down his knife: the door bursts open; Gretchen Schmidt enters, her lovely hair awry, her cheeks flushed. 'I will act!' she cries in bell-like tones. '_Ach, ach!_' cries Goethe. Then Gretchen, with a superb gesture, hangs her hat on the door handle, and recites to the amazed man his beloved 'Faust,' word for word, syllable for syllable!"

Thus Brampenrich shows us, with his supreme word imagery, what really happened.

Gretchen never saw Goethe again; he left Berlin almost immediately for the Black Forest. Gretchen, alone in the great capital, alone and a woman, what could she do? Grundelheim, in his celebrated "Toilers who have Toiled," relates how desperately hard she worked with her mangle in the Konigstrasse. Then one day, when things seemed at their blackest, Romance, with its multi-coloured finger, poked a hole in the bubble of her existence. The King of Prussia drove along the Konigstrasse, bowing to right and left. Gretchen stepped lightly over her mangle and dropped a curtsy. The King was immediately captivated, and a few hours later the happy girl found herself in the Royal Palace. After that events moved rapidly. At the lax German Court Gretchen soon forgot her austere upbringing, and entered into the round games and charades with untold abandon! Alas! the fickle heart of the King was soon turned from her. Realising this Gretchen seized upon a noble much enamoured of her, Furst Lieberwurst zu Schweinen-Kalber, and married him one spring morning in the Chapel Royal. For three months they lived together in the Austrian Tyrol; then Gretchen, heeding at last the persistent call of her art, left him, and fled back to Berlin, where she obtained an engagement to play Juliet. It was from that moment that her real passion for her part developed. It grew to be an obsession--she was fêted, lauded, mentioned in several public speeches. For sixty-five years she played it all over Germany, never tiring, never weakening. People gibbered over her; then came her tragic death at the age of ninety-two in the balcony scene. She stumbled forward, Grundelheim says, then backward, then forward, then backward again, and then forward for the last time. The balcony gave way, and she fell at Romeo's feet (it was the great Fritz Schnotter,

with whom she had been playing for two years: in private life he was, of course, her lover--she always insisted on that).

History tells us that he caught her in his arms--Bottiburgen contests that he caught her in the middle of his chest; anyhow, the house is said to have risen and cheered, thinking it was a new scene suddenly interpolated. Then the curtain slowly fell, and they realised the truth--they would never see their idolised Gretchen again.

In passing, it would perhaps be as well to mention some of the famous Romeos who played opposite this bewitcher of all sexes. There was Reginald Bug, a young Englishman, who loved her passionately for a few years; then the renowned Pierre Dentifrice from the Comédie Française; then Angelo Carlini, and Basto Caballero (founder of the Shakespearean Theatre in Barcelona); then Dimitri Chuggski, a very temperamental, highly strung Russian (it is in Volume VIII. of Edgar Sheepmeadow's "Beds and their Inmates" that he relates the story of Chuggski's desertion of Gretchen; he contends that he left her because she always slept with her mouth open).

Her last and most famous lover on and off the stage was the aforementioned Fritz Schnotter; he is treated lavishly in three volumes of Bottiburgen.

Her portrait on page 100 is a reproduction of Grobmeyer's etching. The original could formerly be viewed, I believe, by applying to the Kaiser for permission and paying 18,000 marks.

THE FIREMEN'S BALL

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The Congo and Other Poems*, by Vachel Lindsay

Section One

"Give the engines room,
Give the engines room."
Louder, faster
The little band-master
Whips up the fluting,
Hurries up the tooting.
He thinks that he stands,
 # To be read, or chanted, with the heavy buzzing bass
 of fire-engines pumping. #
The reins in his hands,
In the fire-chief's place
In the night alarm chase.
The cymbals whang,
The kettledrums bang:--
 # In this passage the reading or chanting
 is shriller and higher. #
"Clear the street,
Clear the street,
Clear the street--Boom, boom.
In the evening gloom,
In the evening gloom,
Give the engines room,
Give the engines room,
Lest souls be trapped
In a terrible tomb."
The sparks and the pine-brands
Whirl on high
From the black and reeking alleys
To the wide red sky.
Hear the hot glass crashing,
Hear the stone steps hissing.
Coal black streams
Down the gutters pour.
There are cries for help
From a far fifth floor.
For a longer ladder
Hear the fire-chief call.
Listen to the music
Of the firemen's ball.
Listen to the music

Of the firemen's ball.

To be read or chanted in a heavy bass.

"'Tis the

NIGHT

Of doom,"

Say the ding-dong doom-bells.

"NIGHT

Of doom,"

Say the ding-dong doom-bells.

Faster, faster

The red flames come.

"Hum grum," say the engines,

"Hum grum grum."

Shriller and higher.

"Buzz, buzz,"

Says the crowd.

"See, see,"

Calls the crowd.

"Look out,"

Yelps the crowd

And the high walls fall:--

Listen to the music

Of the firemen's ball.

Listen to the music

Of the firemen's ball.

Heavy bass.

"'Tis the

NIGHT

Of doom,"

Say the ding-dong doom-bells.

"NIGHT

Of doom,"

Say the ding-dong doom-bells.

Whangaranga, whangaranga,

Whang, whang, whang,

Clang, clang, clangaranga,

Bass, much slower.

Clang, clang, clang.

Clang--a--ranga--

Clang--a--ranga--

Clang,

Clang,

Clang.

Listen--to--the--music--

Of the firemen's ball--

Section Two

"Many's the heart that's breaking
If we could read them all
After the ball is over." (An old song.)

To be read or sung slowly and softly,
in the manner of lustful, insinuating music. #

Scornfully, gaily
The bandmaster sways,
Changing the strain
That the wild band plays.
With a red and royal intoxication,
A tangle of sounds
And a syncopation,
Sweeping and bending
From side to side,
Master of dreams,
With a peacock pride.
A lord of the delicate flowers of delight
He drives compunction
Back through the night.
Dreams he's a soldier
Plumed and spurred,
And valiant lads
Arise at his word,
Flaying the sober
Thoughts he hates,
Driving them back
From the dream-town gates.
How can the languorous
Dancers know
The red dreams come

To be read or chanted slowly and softly
in the manner of lustful insinuating music. #

When the good dreams go?

"'Tis the

NIGHT

Of love,"

Call the silver joy-bells,

"NIGHT

Of love,"

Call the silver joy-bells.

"Honey and wine,

Honey and wine.

Sing low, now, violins,

Sing, sing low,

Blow gently, wood-wind,

Mellow and slow.

Like midnight poppies

The sweethearts bloom.
Their eyes flash power,
Their lips are dumb.
Faster and faster
Their pulses come,
Though softer now
The drum-beats fall.
Honey and wine,
Honey and wine.
'Tis the firemen's ball,
'Tis the firemen's ball.

With a climax of whispered mourning. #
"I am slain,"
Cries true-love
There in the shadow.
"And I die,"
Cries true-love,
There laid low.
"When the fire-dreams come,
The wise dreams go."

Suddenly interrupting. To be read or sung in
a heavy bass. First eight lines as harsh as possible.
Then gradually musical and sonorous. #

BUT HIS CRY IS DROWNED
BY THE PROUD BAND-MASTER.

And now great gongs whang,
Sharper, faster,
And kettledrums rattle
And hide the shame
With a swish and a swirk
In dead love's name.
Red and crimson
And scarlet and rose
Magical poppies
The sweethearts bloom.
The scarlet stays
When the rose-flush goes,
And love lies low
In a marble tomb.
"'Tis the
NIGHT
Of doom,"
Call the ding-dong doom-bells.
"NIGHT
Of Doom,"
Call the ding-dong doom-bells.

Sharply interrupting in a very high key. #
Hark how the piccolos still make cheer.

"'Tis a moonlight night in the spring of the year."

Heavy bass.

CLANGARANGA, CLANGARANGA,
CLANG... CLANG... CLANG.
CLANG... A... RANGA...
CLANG... A... RANGA...
CLANG... CLANG... CLANG...
LISTEN... TO... THE... MUSIC...
OF... THE... FIREMEN'S BALL...
LISTEN... TO... THE... MUSIC...
OF... THE... FIREMEN'S... BALL....

Section Three

In Which, contrary to Artistic Custom, the moral of the piece is placed before the reader.

(From the first Khandaka of the Mahavagga: "There Buddha thus addressed his disciples: 'Everything, O mendicants, is burning. With what fire is it burning? I declare unto you it is burning with the fire of passion, with the fire of anger, with the fire of ignorance. It is burning with the anxieties of birth, decay and death, grief, lamentation, suffering and despair.... A disciple,... becoming weary of all that, divests himself of passion. By absence of passion, he is made free.'")

To be intoned after the manner of a priestly service.

I once knew a teacher,
Who turned from desire,
Who said to the young men
"Wine is a fire."
Who said to the merchants:--
"Gold is a flame
That sears and tortures
If you play at the game."
I once knew a teacher
Who turned from desire
Who said to the soldiers,
"Hate is a fire."
Who said to the statesmen:--
"Power is a flame
That flays and blisters
If you play at the game."
I once knew a teacher
Who turned from desire,
Who said to the lordly,

"Pride is a fire."

Who thus warned the revellers:--

"Life is a flame.

Be cold as the dew

Would you win at the game

With hearts like the stars,

With hearts like the stars."

Interrupting very loudly for the last time.

SO BEWARE,

SO BEWARE,

SO BEWARE OF THE FIRE.

Clear the streets,

BOOM, BOOM,

Clear the streets,

BOOM, BOOM,

GIVE THE ENGINES ROOM,

GIVE THE ENGINES ROOM,

LEST SOULS BE TRAPPED

IN A TERRIBLE TOMB.

SAYS THE SWIFT WHITE HORSE

TO THE SWIFT BLACK HORSE:--

"THERE GOES THE ALARM,

THERE GOES THE ALARM.

THEY ARE HITCHED, THEY ARE OFF,

THEY ARE GONE IN A FLASH,

AND THEY STRAIN AT THE DRIVER'S IRON ARM."

CLANG... A... RANGA.... CLANG... A... RANGA....

CLANG... CLANG... CLANG....

CLANG... A... RANGA.... CLANG... A... RANGA....

CLANG... CLANG... CLANG....

CLANG... A... RANGA.... CLANG... A... RANGA....

CLANG... CLANG... _CLANG_....

THE MARRIAGE OF PHAEDRA

from Project Gutenberg's *The Troll Garden and Selected Stories*, by Willa Cather

The sequence of events was such that MacMaster did not make his pilgrimage to Hugh Treffinger's studio until three years after that painter's death. MacMaster was himself a painter, an American of the Gallicized type, who spent his winters in New York, his summers in Paris, and no inconsiderable amount of time on the broad waters between. He had often contemplated stopping in London on one of his return trips in the late autumn, but he had always deferred leaving Paris until the prick of necessity drove him home by the quickest and shortest route.

Treffinger was a comparatively young man at the time of his death, and there had seemed no occasion for haste until haste was of no avail. Then, possibly, though there had been some correspondence between them, MacMaster felt certain qualms about meeting in the flesh a man who in the flesh was so diversely reported. His intercourse with Treffinger's work had been so deep and satisfying, so apart from other appreciations, that he rather dreaded a critical juncture of any sort. He had always felt himself singularly inept in personal relations, and in this case he had avoided the issue until it was no longer to be feared or hoped for. There still remained, however, Treffinger's great unfinished picture, the *Marriage of Phaedra*, which had never left his studio, and of which MacMaster's friends had now and again brought report that it was the painter's most characteristic production.

The young man arrived in London in the evening, and the next morning went out to Kensington to find Treffinger's studio. It lay in one of the perplexing bystreets off Holland Road, and the number he found on a door set in a high garden wall, the top of which was covered with broken green glass and over which a budding lilac bush nodded. Treffinger's plate was still there, and a card requesting visitors to ring for the attendant. In response to MacMaster's ring, the door was opened by a cleanly built little man, clad in a shooting jacket and trousers that had been made for an ampler figure. He had a fresh complexion, eyes of that common uncertain shade of gray, and was closely shaven except for the incipient muttonchops on his ruddy cheeks. He bore himself in a manner strikingly capable, and there was a sort of trimness and alertness about him, despite the too-generous shoulders of his coat. In one hand he held a bulldog pipe, and in the other a copy of *Sporting Life*. While MacMaster was explaining the purpose of his call he noticed that the man surveyed him critically, though not impertinently. He was admitted into a little tank of a lodge made of whitewashed stone, the back door and windows opening upon a garden. A visitor's book and a pile of catalogues lay on a deal table, together with a bottle of ink and some rusty pens. The wall was ornamented with photographs and colored

prints of racing favorites.

“The studio is h'only open to the public on Saturdays and Sundays,” explained the man--he referred to himself as “Jymes”--“but of course we make exceptions in the case of pynters. Lydy Elling Treffinger 'erself is on the Continent, but Sir 'Ugh's orders was that pynters was to 'ave the run of the place.” He selected a key from his pocket and threw open the door into the studio which, like the lodge, was built against the wall of the garden.

MacMaster entered a long, narrow room, built of smoothed planks, painted a light green; cold and damp even on that fine May morning. The room was utterly bare of furniture--unless a stepladder, a model throne, and a rack laden with large leather portfolios could be accounted such--and was windowless, without other openings than the door and the skylight, under which hung the unfinished picture itself. MacMaster had never seen so many of Treffinger's paintings together. He knew the painter had married a woman with money and had been able to keep such of his pictures as he wished. These, with all of his replicas and studies, he had left as a sort of common legacy to the younger men of the school he had originated.

As soon as he was left alone MacMaster sat down on the edge of the model throne before the unfinished picture. Here indeed was what he had come for; it rather paralyzed his receptivity for the moment, but gradually the thing found its way to him.

At one o'clock he was standing before the collection of studies done for Boccaccio's Garden when he heard a voice at his elbow.

“Pardon, sir, but I was just about to lock up and go to lunch. Are you lookin' for the figure study of Boccaccio 'imself?” James queried respectfully. “Lydy Elling Treffinger give it to Mr. Rossiter to take down to Oxford for some lectures he's been agiving there.”

“Did he never paint out his studies, then?” asked MacMaster with perplexity. “Here are two completed ones for this picture. Why did he keep them?”

“I don't know as I could say as to that, sir,” replied James, smiling indulgently, “but that was 'is way. That is to say, 'e pynted out very frequent, but 'e always made two studies to stand; one in watercolors and one in oils, before 'e went at the final picture--to say nothink of all the pose studies 'e made in pencil before he begun on the composition proper at all. He was that particular. You see, 'e wasn't so keen for the final effect as for the proper pyntin' of 'is pictures. 'E used to say they ought to be well made, the same as any other h'article of trade. I can lay my 'and on the pose studies for you, sir.” He rummaged in one of the portfolios and produced half a dozen drawings,

“These three,” he continued, “was discarded; these two was the pose he finally accepted; this one without alteration, as it were.”

“That's in Paris, as I remember,” James continued reflectively. “It went with the Saint Cecilia into the Baron H---'s collection. Could you tell me, sir, 'as 'e it still? I don't like to lose account of them, but some 'as changed 'ands since Sir 'Ugh's death.”

“H---'s collection is still intact, I believe,” replied MacMaster. “You were with Treffinger long?”

“From my boyhood, sir,” replied James with gravity. “I was a stable boy when 'e took me.”

“You were his man, then?”

“That's it, sir. Nobody else ever done anything around the studio. I always mixed 'is colors and 'e taught me to do a share of the varnishin'; 'e said as 'ow there wasn't a 'ouse in England as could do it proper. You ayn't looked at the Marriage yet, sir?” he asked abruptly, glancing doubtfully at MacMaster, and indicating with his thumb the picture under the north light.

“Not very closely. I prefer to begin with something simpler; that's rather appalling, at first glance,” replied MacMaster.

“Well may you say that, sir,” said James warmly. “That one regular killed Sir 'Ugh; it regular broke 'im up, and nothink will ever convince me as 'ow it didn't bring on 'is second stroke.”

When MacMaster walked back to High Street to take his bus his mind was divided between two exultant convictions. He felt that he had not only found Treffinger's greatest picture, but that, in James, he had discovered a kind of cryptic index to the painter's personality--a clue which, if tactfully followed, might lead to much.

Several days after his first visit to the studio, MacMaster wrote to Lady Mary Percy, telling her that he would be in London for some time and asking her if he might call. Lady Mary was an only sister of Lady Ellen Treffinger, the painter's widow, and MacMaster had known her during one winter he spent at Nice. He had known her, indeed, very well, and Lady Mary, who was astonishingly frank and communicative upon all subjects, had been no less so upon the matter of her sister's unfortunate marriage.

In her reply to his note Lady Mary named an afternoon when she would be alone. She was as good as her word, and when MacMaster arrived he found the drawing room empty. Lady Mary entered shortly after he was announced. She was a tall woman, thin and stiffly jointed, and her body

stood out under the folds of her gown with the rigor of cast iron. This rather metallic suggestion was further carried out in her heavily knuckled hands, her stiff gray hair, and her long, bold-featured face, which was saved from freakishness only by her alert eyes.

“Really,” said Lady Mary, taking a seat beside him and giving him a sort of military inspection through her nose glasses, “really, I had begun to fear that I had lost you altogether. It's four years since I saw you at Nice, isn't it? I was in Paris last winter, but I heard nothing from you.”

“I was in New York then.”

“It occurred to me that you might be. And why are you in London?”

“Can you ask?” replied MacMaster gallantly.

Lady Mary smiled ironically. “But for what else, incidentally?”

“Well, incidentally, I came to see Treffinger's studio and his unfinished picture. Since I've been here, I've decided to stay the summer. I'm even thinking of attempting to do a biography of him.”

“So that is what brought you to London?”

“Not exactly. I had really no intention of anything so serious when I came. It's his last picture, I fancy, that has rather thrust it upon me. The notion has settled down on me like a thing destined.”

“You'll not be offended if I question the clemency of such a destiny,” remarked Lady Mary dryly. “Isn't there rather a surplus of books on that subject already?”

“Such as they are. Oh, I've read them all”--here MacMaster faced Lady Mary triumphantly. “He has quite escaped your amiable critics,” he added, smiling.

“I know well enough what you think, and I daresay we are not much on art,” said Lady Mary with tolerant good humor. “We leave that to peoples who have no physique. Treffinger made a stir for a time, but it seems that we are not capable of a sustained appreciation of such extraordinary methods. In the end we go back to the pictures we find agreeable and unperplexing. He was regarded as an experiment, I fancy; and now it seems that he was rather an unsuccessful one. If you've come to us in a missionary spirit, we'll tolerate you politely, but we'll laugh in our sleeve, I warn you.”

“That really doesn't daunt me, Lady Mary,” declared MacMaster blandly. “As I told you, I'm a man with a mission.”

Lady Mary laughed her hoarse, baritone laugh. "Bravo! And you've come to me for inspiration for your panegyric?"

MacMaster smiled with some embarrassment. "Not altogether for that purpose. But I want to consult you, Lady Mary, about the advisability of troubling Lady Ellen Treffinger in the matter. It seems scarcely legitimate to go on without asking her to give some sort of grace to my proceedings, yet I feared the whole subject might be painful to her. I shall rely wholly upon your discretion."

"I think she would prefer to be consulted," replied Lady Mary judicially. "I can't understand how she endures to have the wretched affair continually raked up, but she does. She seems to feel a sort of moral responsibility. Ellen has always been singularly conscientious about this matter, insofar as her light goes,--which rather puzzles me, as hers is not exactly a magnanimous nature. She is certainly trying to do what she believes to be the right thing. I shall write to her, and you can see her when she returns from Italy."

"I want very much to meet her. She is, I hope, quite recovered in every way," queried MacMaster, hesitatingly.

"No, I can't say that she is. She has remained in much the same condition she sank to before his death. He trampled over pretty much whatever there was in her, I fancy. Women don't recover from wounds of that sort--at least, not women of Ellen's grain. They go on bleeding inwardly."

"You, at any rate, have not grown more reconciled," MacMaster ventured.

"Oh I give him his dues. He was a colorist, I grant you; but that is a vague and unsatisfactory quality to marry to; Lady Ellen Treffinger found it so."

"But, my dear Lady Mary," expostulated MacMaster, "and just repress me if I'm becoming too personal--but it must, in the first place, have been a marriage of choice on her part as well as on his."

Lady Mary poised her glasses on her large forefinger and assumed an attitude suggestive of the clinical lecture room as she replied. "Ellen, my dear boy, is an essentially romantic person. She is quiet about it, but she runs deep. I never knew how deep until I came against her on the issue of that marriage. She was always discontented as a girl; she found things dull and prosaic, and the ardor of his courtship was agreeable to her. He met her during her first season in town. She is handsome, and there were plenty of other men, but I grant you your scowling brigand was the most picturesque of the lot. In his courtship, as in everything else, he was theatrical to the point of being ridiculous, but Ellen's

sense of humor is not her strongest quality. He had the charm of celebrity, the air of a man who could storm his way through anything to get what he wanted. That sort of vehemence is particularly effective with women like Ellen, who can be warmed only by reflected heat, and she couldn't at all stand out against it. He convinced her of his necessity; and that done, all's done."

"I can't help thinking that, even on such a basis, the marriage should have turned out better," MacMaster remarked reflectively.

"The marriage," Lady Mary continued with a shrug, "was made on the basis of a mutual misunderstanding. Ellen, in the nature of the case, believed that she was doing something quite out of the ordinary in accepting him, and expected concessions which, apparently, it never occurred to him to make. After his marriage he relapsed into his old habits of incessant work, broken by violent and often brutal relaxations. He insulted her friends and foisted his own upon her--many of them well calculated to arouse aversion in any well-bred girl. He had Ghillini constantly at the house--a homeless vagabond, whose conversation was impossible. I don't say, mind you, that he had not grievances on his side. He had probably overrated the girl's possibilities, and he let her see that he was disappointed in her. Only a large and generous nature could have borne with him, and Ellen's is not that. She could not at all understand that odious strain of plebeian pride which plumes itself upon not having risen above its sources."

As MacMaster drove back to his hotel he reflected that Lady Mary Percy had probably had good cause for dissatisfaction with her brother-in-law. Treffinger was, indeed, the last man who should have married into the Percy family. The son of a small tobacconist, he had grown up a sign-painter's apprentice; idle, lawless, and practically letterless until he had drifted into the night classes of the Albert League, where Ghillini sometimes lectured. From the moment he came under the eye and influence of that erratic Italian, then a political exile, his life had swerved sharply from its old channel. This man had been at once incentive and guide, friend and master, to his pupil. He had taken the raw clay out of the London streets and molded it anew. Seemingly he had divined at once where the boy's possibilities lay, and had thrown aside every canon of orthodox instruction in the training of him. Under him Treffinger acquired his superficial, yet facile, knowledge of the classics; had steeped himself in the monkish Latin and medieval romances which later gave his work so naive and remote a quality. That was the beginning of the wattle fences, the cobble pave, the brown roof beams, the cunningly wrought fabrics that gave to his pictures such a richness of decorative effect.

As he had told Lady Mary Percy, MacMaster had found the imperative inspiration of his purpose in Treffinger's unfinished picture, the Marriage of Phaedra. He had always believed that the key to

Treffinger's individuality lay in his singular education; in the *Roman de la Rose*, in Boccaccio, and Amadis, those works which had literally transcribed themselves upon the blank soul of the London street boy, and through which he had been born into the world of spiritual things. Treffinger had been a man who lived after his imagination; and his mind, his ideals and, as MacMaster believed, even his personal ethics, had to the last been colored by the trend of his early training. There was in him alike the freshness and spontaneity, the frank brutality and the religious mysticism, which lay well back of the fifteenth century. In the *Marriage of Phaedra* MacMaster found the ultimate expression of this spirit, the final word as to Treffinger's point of view.

As in all Treffinger's classical subjects, the conception was wholly medieval. This Phaedra, just turning from her husband and maidens to greet her husband's son, giving him her first fearsome glance from under her half-lifted veil, was no daughter of Minos. The daughter of *heathenness* and the early church she was; doomed to torturing visions and scourgings, and the wrangling of soul with flesh. The venerable Theseus might have been victorious Charlemagne, and Phaedra's maidens belonged rather in the train of Blanche of Castile than at the Cretan court. In the earlier studies Hippolytus had been done with a more pagan suggestion; but in each successive drawing the glorious figure had been deflowered of something of its serene unconsciousness, until, in the canvas under the skylight, he appeared a very Christian knight. This male figure, and the face of Phaedra, painted with such magical preservation of tone under the heavy shadow of the veil, were plainly Treffinger's highest achievements of craftsmanship. By what labor he had reached the seemingly inevitable composition of the picture--with its twenty figures, its plenitude of light and air, its restful distances seen through white porticoes--countless studies bore witness.

From James's attitude toward the picture MacMaster could well conjecture what the painter's had been. This picture was always uppermost in James's mind; its custodianship formed, in his eyes, his occupation. He was manifestly apprehensive when visitors--not many came nowadays--lingered near it. "It was the *Marriage* as killed 'im," he would often say, "and for the matter 'o that, it did like to 'av been the death of all of us."

By the end of his second week in London MacMaster had begun the notes for his study of Hugh Treffinger and his work. When his researches led him occasionally to visit the studios of Treffinger's friends and erstwhile disciples, he found their Treffinger manner fading as the ring of Treffinger's personality died out in them. One by one they were stealing back into the fold of national British art; the hand that had wound them up was still. MacMaster despaired of them and confined himself more and more exclusively to the studio, to such of Treffinger's letters as were available--they were for the most part singularly negative and colorless--and to his interrogation of Treffinger's man.

He could not himself have traced the successive steps by which he was gradually admitted into James's confidence. Certainly most of his adroit strategies to that end failed humiliatingly, and whatever it was that built up an understanding between them must have been instinctive and intuitive on both sides. When at last James became anecdotal, personal, there was that in every word he let fall which put breath and blood into MacMaster's book. James had so long been steeped in that penetrating personality that he fairly exuded it. Many of his very phrases, mannerisms, and opinions were impressions that he had taken on like wet plaster in his daily contact with Treffinger. Inwardly he was lined with cast-off epithelioms, as outwardly he was clad in the painter's discarded coats. If the painter's letters were formal and perfunctory, if his expressions to his friends had been extravagant, contradictory, and often apparently insincere--still, MacMaster felt himself not entirely without authentic sources. It was James who possessed Treffinger's legend; it was with James that he had laid aside his pose. Only in his studio, alone, and face to face with his work, as it seemed, had the man invariably been himself. James had known him in the one attitude in which he was entirely honest; their relation had fallen well within the painter's only indubitable integrity. James's report of Treffinger was distorted by no hallucination of artistic insight, colored by no interpretation of his own. He merely held what he had heard and seen; his mind was a sort of camera obscura. His very limitations made him the more literal and minutely accurate.

One morning, when MacMaster was seated before the Marriage of Phaedra, James entered on his usual round of dusting.

"I've 'eard from Lydy Elling by the post, sir," he remarked, "an' she's give h'orders to 'ave the 'ouse put in readiness. I doubt she'll be 'ere by Thursday or Friday next."

"She spends most of her time abroad?" queried MacMaster; on the subject of Lady Treffinger James consistently maintained a very delicate reserve.

"Well, you could 'ardly say she does that, sir. She finds the 'ouse a bit dull, I daresay, so durin' the season she stops mostly with Lydy Mary Percy, at Grosvenor Square. Lydy Mary's a h'only sister." After a few moments he continued, speaking in jerks governed by the rigor of his dusting: "H'only this morning I come upon this scarfpin," exhibiting a very striking instance of that article, "an' I recalled as 'ow Sir 'Ugh give it me when 'e was acourting of Lydy Elling. Blowed if I ever see a man go in for a 'oman like 'im! 'E was that gone, sir. 'E never went in on anythink so 'ard before nor since, till 'e went in on the Marriage there--though 'e mostly went in on things pretty keen; 'ad the measles when 'e was thirty, strong as cholera, an' come close to dyin' of 'em. 'E wasn't strong for Lydy Elling's set; they was a bit too stiff for

'im. A free an' easy gentleman, 'e was; 'e liked 'is dinner with a few friends an' them jolly, but 'e wasn't much on what you might call big affairs. But once 'e went in for Lydy Elling 'e broke 'imself to new paces; He give away 'is rings an' pins, an' the tylor's man an' the 'aberdasher's man was at 'is rooms continual. 'E got 'imself put up for a club in Piccadilly; 'e starved 'imself thin, an' worried 'imself white, an' ironed 'imself out, an' drawed 'imself tight as a bow string. It was a good job 'e come a winner, or I don't know w'at'd 'a been to pay."

The next week, in consequence of an invitation from Lady Ellen Treffinger, MacMaster went one afternoon to take tea with her. He was shown into the garden that lay between the residence and the studio, where the tea table was set under a gnarled pear tree. Lady Ellen rose as he approached--he was astonished to note how tall she was--and greeted him graciously, saying that she already knew him through her sister. MacMaster felt a certain satisfaction in her; in her reassuring poise and repose, in the charming modulations of her voice and the indolent reserve of her full, almond eyes. He was even delighted to find her face so inscrutable, though it chilled his own warmth and made the open frankness he had wished to permit himself impossible. It was a long face, narrow at the chin, very delicately featured, yet steeled by an impassive mask of self-control. It was behind just such finely cut, close-sealed faces, MacMaster reflected, that nature sometimes hid astonishing secrets. But in spite of this suggestion of hardness he felt that the unerring taste that Treffinger had always shown in larger matters had not deserted him when he came to the choosing of a wife, and he admitted that he could not himself have selected a woman who looked more as Treffinger's wife should look.

While he was explaining the purpose of his frequent visits to the studio she heard him with courteous interest. "I have read, I think, everything that has been published on Sir Hugh Treffinger's work, and it seems to me that there is much left to be said," he concluded.

"I believe they are rather inadequate," she remarked vaguely. She hesitated a moment, absently fingering the ribbons of her gown, then continued, without raising her eyes; "I hope you will not think me too exacting if I ask to see the proofs of such chapters of your work as have to do with Sir Hugh's personal life. I have always asked that privilege."

MacMaster hastily assured her as to this, adding, "I mean to touch on only such facts in his personal life as have to do directly with his work--such as his monkish education under Ghillini."

"I see your meaning, I think," said Lady Ellen, looking at him with wide, uncomprehending eyes.

When MacMaster stopped at the studio on leaving the house he stood for some time before Treffinger's one portrait of himself, that brigand of a picture, with its full throat and square head; the short upper lip blackened by the close-clipped mustache, the wiry hair tossed down over the forehead, the strong white teeth set hard on a short pipestem. He could well understand what manifold tortures the mere grain of the man's strong red and brown flesh might have inflicted upon a woman like Lady Ellen. He could conjecture, too, Treffinger's impotent revolt against that very repose which had so dazzled him when it first defied his daring; and how once possessed of it, his first instinct had been to crush it, since he could not melt it.

Toward the close of the season Lady Ellen Treffinger left town. MacMaster's work was progressing rapidly, and he and James wore away the days in their peculiar relation, which by this time had much of friendliness. Excepting for the regular visits of a Jewish picture dealer, there were few intrusions upon their solitude. Occasionally a party of Americans rang at the little door in the garden wall, but usually they departed speedily for the Moorish hall and tinkling fountain of the great show studio of London, not far away.

This Jew, an Austrian by birth, who had a large business in Melbourne, Australia, was a man of considerable discrimination, and at once selected the Marriage of Phaedra as the object of his especial interest. When, upon his first visit, Lichtenstein had declared the picture one of the things done for time, MacMaster had rather warmed toward him and had talked to him very freely. Later, however, the man's repulsive personality and innate vulgarity so wore upon him that, the more genuine the Jew's appreciation, the more he resented it and the more base he somehow felt it to be. It annoyed him to see Lichtenstein walking up and down before the picture, shaking his head and blinking his watery eyes over his nose glasses, ejaculating: "Dot is a chem, a chem! It is wordt to gome den dousant miles for such a bainting, eh? To make Eurobe abbreciate such a work of ardt it is necessary to take it away while she is napping. She has never abbreciated until she has lost, but," knowingly, "she will buy back."

James had, from the first, felt such a distrust of the man that he would never leave him alone in the studio for a moment. When Lichtenstein insisted upon having Lady Ellen Treffinger's address James rose to the point of insolence. "It ayn't no use to give it, noway. Lydy Treffinger never has nothink to do with dealers." MacMaster quietly repented his rash confidences, fearing that he might indirectly cause Lady Ellen annoyance from this merciless speculator, and he recalled with chagrin that Lichtenstein had extorted from him, little by little, pretty much the entire plan of his book, and especially the place in it which the Marriage of Phaedra was to occupy.

By this time the first chapters of MacMaster's book were in the hands

of his publisher, and his visits to the studio were necessarily less frequent. The greater part of his time was now employed with the engravers who were to reproduce such of Treffinger's pictures as he intended to use as illustrations.

He returned to his hotel late one evening after a long and vexing day at the engravers to find James in his room, seated on his steamer trunk by the window, with the outline of a great square draped in sheets resting against his knee.

"Why, James, what's up?" he cried in astonishment, glancing inquiringly at the sheeted object.

"Ayn't you seen the pypers, sir?" jerked out the man.

"No, now I think of it, I haven't even looked at a paper. I've been at the engravers' plant all day. I haven't seen anything."

James drew a copy of the Times from his pocket and handed it to him, pointing with a tragic finger to a paragraph in the social column. It was merely the announcement of Lady Ellen Treffinger's engagement to Captain Alexander Gresham.

"Well, what of it, my man? That surely is her privilege."

James took the paper, turned to another page, and silently pointed to a paragraph in the art notes which stated that Lady Treffinger had presented to the X--gallery the entire collection of paintings and sketches now in her late husband's studio, with the exception of his unfinished picture, the Marriage Of Phaedra, which she had sold for a large sum to an Australian dealer who had come to London purposely to secure some of Treffinger's paintings.

MacMaster pursed up his lips and sat down, his overcoat still on.

"Well, James, this is something of a--something of a jolt, eh? It never occurred to me she'd really do it."

"Lord, you don't know 'er, sir," said James bitterly, still staring at the floor in an attitude of abandoned dejection.

MacMaster started up in a flash of enlightenment, "What on earth have you got there, James? It's not-surely it's not--"

"Yes, it is, sir," broke in the man excitedly. "It's the Marriage itself. It ayn't agoing to H'Australia, no'ow!"

"But man, what are you going to do with it? It's Lichtenstein's property now, as it seems."

“It ayn't, sir, that it ayn't. No, by Gawd, it ayn't!” shouted James, breaking into a choking fury. He controlled himself with an effort and added supplicatingly: “Oh, sir, you ayn't agoing to see it go to H'Australia, w'ere they send convic's?” He unpinned and flung aside the sheets as though to let Phaedra plead for herself.

MacMaster sat down again and looked sadly at the doomed masterpiece. The notion of James having carried it across London that night rather appealed to his fancy. There was certainly a flavor about such a highhanded proceeding. “However did you get it here?” he queried.

“I got a four-wheeler and come over direct, sir. Good job I 'appened to 'ave the chaynge about me.”

“You came up High Street, up Piccadilly, through the Haymarket and Trafalgar Square, and into the Strand?” queried MacMaster with a relish.

“Yes, sir. Of course, sir,” assented James with surprise.

MacMaster laughed delightedly. “It was a beautiful idea, James, but I'm afraid we can't carry it any further.”

“I was thinkin' as 'ow it would be a rare chance to get you to take the Marriage over to Paris for a year or two, sir, until the thing blows over?” suggested James blandly.

“I'm afraid that's out of the question, James. I haven't the right stuff in me for a pirate, or even a vulgar smuggler, I'm afraid.” MacMaster found it surprisingly difficult to say this, and he busied himself with the lamp as he said it. He heard James's hand fall heavily on the trunk top, and he discovered that he very much disliked sinking in the man's estimation.

“Well, sir,” remarked James in a more formal tone, after a protracted silence; “then there's nothink for it but as 'ow I'll 'ave to make way with it myself.”

“And how about your character, James? The evidence would be heavy against you, and even if Lady Treffinger didn't prosecute you'd be done for.”

“Blow my character!--your pardon, sir,” cried James, starting to his feet. “W'at do I want of a character? I'll chuck the 'ole thing, and damned lively, too. The shop's to be sold out, an' my place is gone any'ow. I'm agoing to enlist, or try the gold fields. I've lived too long with h'artists; I'd never give satisfaction in livery now. You know 'ow it is yourself, sir; there ayn't no life like it, no'ow.”

For a moment MacMaster was almost equal to abetting James in his theft.

He reflected that pictures had been whitewashed, or hidden in the crypts of churches, or under the floors of palaces from meaner motives, and to save them from a fate less ignominious. But presently, with a sigh, he shook his head.

“No, James, it won't do at all. It has been tried over and over again, ever since the world has been agoing and pictures amaking. It was tried in Florence and in Venice, but the pictures were always carried away in the end. You see, the difficulty is that although Treffinger told you what was not to be done with the picture, he did not say definitely what was to be done with it. Do you think Lady Treffinger really understands that he did not want it to be sold?”

“Well, sir, it was like this, sir,” said James, resuming his seat on the trunk and again resting the picture against his knee. “My memory is as clear as glass about it. After Sir 'Ugh got up from 'is first stroke, 'e took a fresh start at the _Marriage_. Before that 'e 'ad been working at it only at night for a while back; the _Legend_ was the big picture then, an' was under the north light w'ere 'e worked of a morning. But one day 'e bid me take the _Legend_ down an' put the _Marriage_ in its place, an' 'e says, dashin' on 'is jacket, 'Jymes, this is a start for the finish, this time.'

“From that on 'e worked at the night picture in the mornin'--a thing contrary to 'is custom. The _Marriage_ went wrong, and wrong--an' Sir 'Ugh agettin' seedier an' seedier every day. 'E tried models an' models, an' smudged an' pynted out on account of 'er face goin' wrong in the shadow. Sometimes 'e layed it on the colors, an' swore at me an' things in general. He got that discouraged about 'imself that on 'is low days 'e used to say to me: 'Jymes, remember one thing; if anythink 'appens to me, the _Marriage_ is not to go out of 'ere unfinished. It's worth the lot of 'em, my boy, an' it's not agoing to go shabby for lack of pains.' 'E said things to that effect repeated.

“He was workin' at the picture the last day, before 'e went to 'is club. 'E kept the carriage waitin' near an hour while 'e put on a stroke an' then drawed back for to look at it, an' then put on another, careful like. After 'e 'ad 'is gloves on, 'e come back an' took away the brushes I was startin' to clean, an' put in another touch or two. 'It's acomin', Jymes,' 'e says, 'by gad if it ayn't.' An' with that 'e goes out. It was cruel sudden, w'at come after.

“That night I was lookin' to 'is clothes at the 'ouse when they brought 'im 'ome. He was conscious, but w'en I ran downstairs for to 'elp lift 'im up, I knowed 'e was a finished man. After we got 'im into bed 'e kept lookin' restless at me and then at Lydy Elling and ajerkin' of 'is 'and. Finally 'e quite raised it an' shot 'is thumb out toward the wall. 'He wants water; ring, Jymes,' says Lydy Elling, placid. But I knowed 'e was pointin' to the shop.

“Lydy Treffinger,' says I, bold, 'he's pointin' to the studio. He means about the _Marriage_ ; 'e told me today as 'ow 'e never wanted it sold unfinished. Is that it, Sir 'Ugh?"

“He smiled an' nodded slight an' closed 'is eyes. 'Thank you, Jymes,' says Lydy Elling, placid. Then 'e opened 'is eyes an' looked long and 'ard at Lydy Elling.

“Of course I'll try to do as you'd wish about the picture, 'Ugh, if that's w'at's troublin' you,' she says quiet. With that 'e closed 'is eyes and 'e never opened 'em. He died unconscious at four that mornin'.

“You see, sir, Lydy Elling was always cruel 'ard on the _Marriage_. From the first it went wrong, an' Sir 'Ugh was out of temper pretty constant. She came into the studio one day and looked at the picture an' asked 'im why 'e didn't throw it up an' quit aworriting 'imself. He answered sharp, an' with that she said as 'ow she didn't see w'at there was to make such a row about, no'ow. She spoke 'er mind about that picture, free; an' Sir 'Ugh swore 'ot an' let a 'andful of brushes fly at 'is study, an' Lydy Elling picked up 'er skirts careful an' chill, an' drifted out of the studio with 'er eyes calm and 'er chin 'igh. If there was one thing Lydy Elling 'ad no comprehension of, it was the usefulness of swearin'. So the _Marriage_ was a sore thing between 'em. She is uncommon calm, but uncommon bitter, is Lydy Elling. She's never come anear the studio since that day she went out 'oldin' up of 'er skirts. W'en 'er friends goes over she excuses 'erself along o' the strain. Strain--Gawd!" James ground his wrath short in his teeth.

“I'll tell you what I'll do, James, and it's our only hope. I'll see Lady Ellen tomorrow. The _Times_ says she returned today. You take the picture back to its place, and I'll do what I can for it. If anything is done to save it, it must be done through Lady Ellen Treffinger herself, that much is clear. I can't think that she fully understands the situation. If she did, you know, she really couldn't have any motive--”

He stopped suddenly. Somehow, in the dusky lamplight, her small, close-sealed face came ominously back to him. He rubbed his forehead and knitted his brows thoughtfully. After a moment he shook his head and went on: “I am positive that nothing can be gained by highhanded methods, James. Captain Gresham is one of the most popular men in London, and his friends would tear up Treffinger's bones if he were annoyed by any scandal of our making--and this scheme you propose would inevitably result in scandal. Lady Ellen has, of course, every legal right to sell the picture. Treffinger made considerable inroads upon her estate, and, as she is about to marry a man without income, she doubtless feels that she has a right to replenish her patrimony.”

He found James amenable, though doggedly skeptical. He went down into the street, called a carriage, and saw James and his burden into it.

Standing in the doorway, he watched the carriage roll away through the drizzling mist, weave in and out among the wet, black vehicles and darting cab lights, until it was swallowed up in the glare and confusion of the Strand. "It is rather a fine touch of irony," he reflected, "that he, who is so out of it, should be the one to really care. Poor Treffinger," he murmured as, with a rather spiritless smile, he turned back into his hotel. "Poor Treffinger; _sic transit gloria_."

The next afternoon MacMaster kept his promise. When he arrived at Lady Mary Percy's house he saw preparations for a function of some sort, but he went resolutely up the steps, telling the footman that his business was urgent. Lady Ellen came down alone, excusing her sister. She was dressed for receiving, and MacMaster had never seen one so beautiful. The color in her cheeks sent a softening glow over her small, delicately cut features.

MacMaster apologized for his intrusion and came unflinchingly to the object of his call. He had come, he said, not only to offer her his warmest congratulations, but to express his regret that a great work of art was to leave England.

Lady Treffinger looked at him in wide-eyed astonishment. Surely, she said, she had been careful to select the best of the pictures for the X--- gallery, in accordance with Sir Hugh Treffinger's wishes.

"And did he--pardon me, Lady Treffinger, but in mercy set my mind at rest--did he or did he not express any definite wish concerning this one picture, which to me seems worth all the others, unfinished as it is?"

Lady Treffinger paled perceptibly, but it was not the pallor of confusion. When she spoke there was a sharp tremor in her smooth voice, the edge of a resentment that tore her like pain. "I think his man has some such impression, but I believe it to be utterly unfounded. I cannot find that he ever expressed any wish concerning the disposition of the picture to any of his friends. Unfortunately, Sir Hugh was not always discreet in his remarks to his servants."

"Captain Gresham, Lady Ellingham, and Miss Ellingham," announced a servant, appearing at the door.

There was a murmur in the hall, and MacMaster greeted the smiling Captain and his aunt as he bowed himself out.

To all intents and purposes the _Marriage of Phaedra_ was already entombed in a vague continent in the Pacific, somewhere on the other side of the world.



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